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Woman

OUT THURS.—SEPT. 5

Flying in the missile age

THE NEED FOR PILOTS, navigators and air electronics officers is as urgent as ever . . . and the career prospects no less promising. Weapons change, tactics change, but the role of the Royal Air Force today remains the same.

'I should like to say a word about the future of the Royal Air Force . . . The introduction of new weapons will be a gradual process, extending over a good number of years, and even then there will still remain a very wide variety of roles for which manned aircraft will continue to be needed. I therefore hope that young men who have the ambition to be pilots, as well as those who are interested in new technical advances, will continue as before to look to the R.A.F. for a fine and useful career.'

MINISTER OF DEFENCE, APRIL 16TH 1957

More opportunities — not less. To a young man ambitious to fly, and with the ability to lead others, the R.A.F. offers a fine and useful career. Men of high quality are required to fly the V-bombers, fighters and high-speed reconnaissance and transport aircraft. Even for those functions where unmanned missiles will in time give the answer, manned aircraft must continue in service for a number of years yet. Moreover, manned aircraft will *always* be needed for those functions to which the human brain in the air is indispensable. And, whatever new instruments of air power are evolved, the R.A.F. will always need men of initiative who have been trained to master the problems of the air in the air. For such men this is a time of opportunity. Not only can they fulfil their ambition to fly for as long as they serve. They will have the chance of a full and satisfying career. Aircrew do much more than fly. They are often seconded for other important work in Britain and abroad. Variety is more than ever the essence of a career in the R.A.F. Whatever a man becomes—pilot, navigator, air electronics officer—there is no limit to what he may achieve. Quality counts. There is, and always will be, room for good men.

A sure future—good pay. You can join the R.A.F. through the Direct Commission Scheme, confident of a permanent career right up to pension age. Or you can choose a twelve-year engagement with the option of leaving after eight. If you leave after 12 years you take back to civilian life a tax-free gratuity of £4,000! Alternatively, there is a five-year Short Service Commission Scheme, and for University Graduates, a special four-year Short Service Commission. Whichever you choose, the pay is good. At the new rates, a Flight Lieutenant of 25, can draw, with full allowances, about £1,500 a year.

The advent of the stand-off bomb (air-to-ground missile, for despatch several hundred miles from a target) actually enhances the vital role of the Valiant and other V-bombers for many years to come.

How to fly with the R.A.F. You must be between 17½ and 25 and absolutely fit. You must have General Certificate of Education or Scottish Leaving Certificate or their equivalents. You must be able to lead others, and you must have aptitude as well as enthusiasm for flying. If you feel you have all these qualities, write at once for details of the schemes of entry and an informative booklet, to the Air Ministry (JB1), Adastral House, London, W.C.1. Give date of birth and educational qualifications.

The Royal Air Force

Flying ...and a career

JOHN BULL

189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Rudolph Sabor left his homeland just in time

To Rudolph Siegfried Sabor, a German anti-Nazi, the 4 a.m. knock on the door of his home at 89 Hindenburgdamm, Berlin, meant only one thing—the Gestapo. Sabor scrambled from his bed. He flung up the window and jumped for his life. For the next three days he went into hiding by travelling round and round Berlin on the *Ringbahn*, the underground railway line which goes round the city like the Circle Line in London, and operates day and night. Then, on August 29, 1939, Sabor boarded one of the last boats to leave Germany for a British port for the next six years.

Now he is a secondary modern schoolmaster at Chessington, Surrey, where he teaches English and music, and is the founder of the famous Chessingers schoolgirls' choir, which he writes about on page 10.

Aged forty-one and a naturalized Briton, burly, soft-spoken Sabor lives at Molesey with his German-born wife Emmy, who fled from Germany before him and married him in Britain, and their children Monica (eleven) and Peter (eight).

A vigorous champion of the British educational system and our secondary modern schools, Sabor believes that most of the criticism levelled at the eleven-plus exam is unfair. "The exam is practically foolproof," he says. "If a clever child fails you can usually trace the blame to over-zealous parents who have promised him the world if he passes."

On the day his own daughter sat for the exam, Sabor promised her a wristwatch if she *failed*. "When we heard that she had passed I gave her a ride on my motor-bike as a consolation prize."

WHEN Kenneth Grenville Myer came down from Cambridge he installed himself in a bed-sitter in West London and prepared to learn of life. "In fact," says Myer, "I learned little more than to have a healthy regard for landladies and to remain calm in the face of the eccentricities of the show people who shared my lodgings." But, more than twenty-five years later, he has drawn on that learning for his story, *Man On A String*, which begins on page 16.

Myer left London's boarding-houses to embark on what he calls the rolling stone period of his life. "But I gathered no moss," he says. "Instead, I collected snow—by the mouthful." For his travels took him to St. Moritz and the thrills of the Cresta Run. "Unfortunately," he says, "I regularly came off at the hairpin bends." Making the best of his misfortunes he promptly founded a dining club for others who had failed to finish the course.

After the war, during which he saw service in India, Myer returned to work in London. He became an interviewer for the B.B.C.'s programme *In Town Tonight*. "Perhaps it's meeting all these exciting people every day that has made me a stay-at-home."

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Free Speech

- **Sports which encourage the snob**
- **Honking trains which run on silent wheels**
- **How TV drives children into libraries**

I BELONG to four sports clubs—golf, tennis, cricket and rugger. At the golf club everybody knows what everybody else earns; business success is the criterion for acceptance.

Wives rule the tennis club. Their clothes and social abilities decide which clique their husbands shall join—and tennis certainly breeds snobbery. For cricketers the game is the thing. The man who scores a lot of runs is top dog in the bar and on the committee—and his wife rules the other women.

At my rugger club I know nobody's salary. Social barriers are down and rugby players seem to be the only weekend sportsmen willing to work for their club. And on Saturday wives are completely forgotten; but members are always boasting about their sons' rugger potentialities.—K. C., Hendon, N.W.4.

Tenancy Rights

If plants put into a garden by a tenant immediately become the property of his landlord ("Why?", JOHN BULL, August 3) then presumably my landlord could legally help himself to my garden produce.—G. D. WARREN, Ely, Cambridgeshire.

"As long as Mr. Warren remains a tenant he is entitled to full use and enjoyment of the landlord's property," says a lawyer. "And that includes the produce of the garden. Fruits of the soil belong to the tenant, but not permanent plantings like trees and hedges."

Personal Pry

I have long suspected that much of the information demanded on official

forms is of no use whatsoever. When my son joined the municipal library I had to complete a form which included a request for my occupation. As I couldn't fathom how my method of earning a living could possibly interest the library authorities I entered my profession as "Burglar." My son was accepted without question.—R. P., Sheldon, Birmingham, 26.

"We find this sort of information useful in compiling annual reports or readership surveys," says a librarian, "although people are not obliged to give it and not all libraries ask for it."

Trumpeting Trains

Because we live near a small railway station we welcomed the start of the long-advertised diesel services. "At last," we thought, "we shall be

spared the racket of those snorting engines and piercing whistles." But we are disillusioned. For with the diesels came outsize Klaxon horns whose volume rivals the trumpeting of elephants.—JOHN T. GOODWIN, Cateswell Road, Hall Green, Birmingham.

"Diesel trains run so silently," says British Railways, "that they must use a loud and distinctive warning of approach that can't be confused with, for example, a motor horn."

Splash Cure For Sharks

It may be disconcerting to know that sharks frequent parts of our coast but they are arrant cowards and can be chased away by vigorous splashing and shouting.

The crawl stroke was invented by the Solomon Islanders to scare off lurking sharks. It brings legs as well as arms out of the water to create a commotion which no shark can stand. —J. H., Bath.

"Splashing and noise would probably give a surface swimmer his only chance of escape," says an expert skin diver. "Incidentally, sharks don't seem interested in frogmen swimming under water."

No Call For Albania

I was interested to note from the telephone directory that telephone services are available between Britain and all the European countries except Albania.

Is the reason for this political or mechanical? It seems odd that Albania alone among the Soviet satellites should be without telephonic communication with the West. —A. B. ARMSTRONG, Thorsby Road, Altrincham, Cheshire.

"Lack of public demand is the only reason for this," says the International Telecommunication Union. "Telegrams can be sent to Albania at the rate of twenty-two words for 5s. 11½d., but the G.P.O. was asked to send out only 191 words during the first three months of this year."

Speed On Four Legs

The suggestion by T. S., of Chippenham, Wiltshire, that athletes might reach thirty miles an hour if only they would abandon their ungainly upright posture and run on all fours ("Free Speech," August 3) was probably meant as a joke.

The gazelle boy

But two little girls found in a wolf den about seventy miles from Calcutta, India, in 1920, were said to run swiftly on all fours, and a boy found running with a herd of gazelles in the Arabian desert thirteen years ago was captured with great difficulty because he could run as fast as the graceful animals which had apparently brought him up. — A. O., Coventry, Warwickshire.

Hazardous Zebras

The suggestion by M. W. Batchelor, of Sheffield, that cars should be fitted with brake warning lights at the front as well as the back for the benefit of pedestrians at zebra crossings ("Free Speech," August 3) is interesting but it misses the point.

A good driver does not rely upon his brakes for slowing down. He uses them only at the very last moment to bring the car to a stop. The car which approached with its brakes on would be the very one I wouldn't trust, especially on a slippery road. —JASPER SMITH, Wickford, Essex.

. . . Zebra crossings are death traps and should be abolished, particularly on busy roads where unbroken streams of vehicles drive nose to tail over these alleged safety zones.

The only solution to the problem is the universal introduction of crossings with push-button stop signals controlled by pedestrians. These are safe because the driver knows that he *must* stop when the red light appears, and the pedestrian knows that he will do so. — A. R. McD. MURDOCH, Glasgow, S.4.

Barbed Reply

W. Duncan of Glasgow, is worried because innocent young children seem to be the only victims of barbed wire fences ("Free Speech," August 10). But we had to put this wire round our paddock to stop innocent young children climbing through the hedges and throwing stones at ponies. They lamed a foal. Then we had to put a few strands on top of the garden wall to stop children stealing the fruit.

If young children get much more innocent anyone who possesses *anything* will have to surround it with barbed wire entanglements.—W. A., Fawley, Hampshire.

One-man Buses

Some bus drivers in the Maidstone area don't like one-manning ("One Man Saves Your Bus Fares," JOHN BULL, July 27). After spending time issuing tickets we either have to run late or exceed the speed limit catching up. The blind, the aged and mothers with children miss the conductor's helping hand, and the sliding doors obscure the left-hand rear mirror, especially when misted over. We also wonder how we are going to reverse our vehicles in fog without the help of a conductor. —D. B., Kent.

"Our forty-five one-man buses are operating on routes that would otherwise prove uneconomical," says Maidstone and District Motor Services, Ltd. "Suggestions and criticisms from the drivers are always carefully considered and timetables adjusted if necessary. But we find that the system works well as soon as drivers and passengers have got used to the new routine—and the sliding doors operated by the driver have cut platform accidents by half."

Homework Away

Television offers a cruel enticement to children trying to do homework, but because too many parents refuse to sacrifice their own viewing time more and more children are being driven from their homes to seek the quiet of local reference libraries.

At least one local authority in London—Wandsworth Borough Council—has recognized this TV menace and has provided special facilities for homework study in the children's reference section of a new branch library. I hope that other local authorities will follow suit.—M. GODFREY, Bournemouth, Hampshire.

Airless Wonder

While driving along a main road recently my wife and I noticed a car in front which seemed to have an unusual mascot on the roof. But as we drew nearer we found the mascot to be a live pigeon perched on the shiny surface despite the fact that his mount was travelling at forty miles an hour.—J. HARPER, Sunderland, Co. Durham.

"Air flowing over the windscreen was probably being thrown high enough to create a dead-spot on the roof," says a car designer. "When one of the old airships was flying at sixty miles an hour there used to be a layer of calm air along the top deep enough for a man to crawl through without ruffling his hair."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

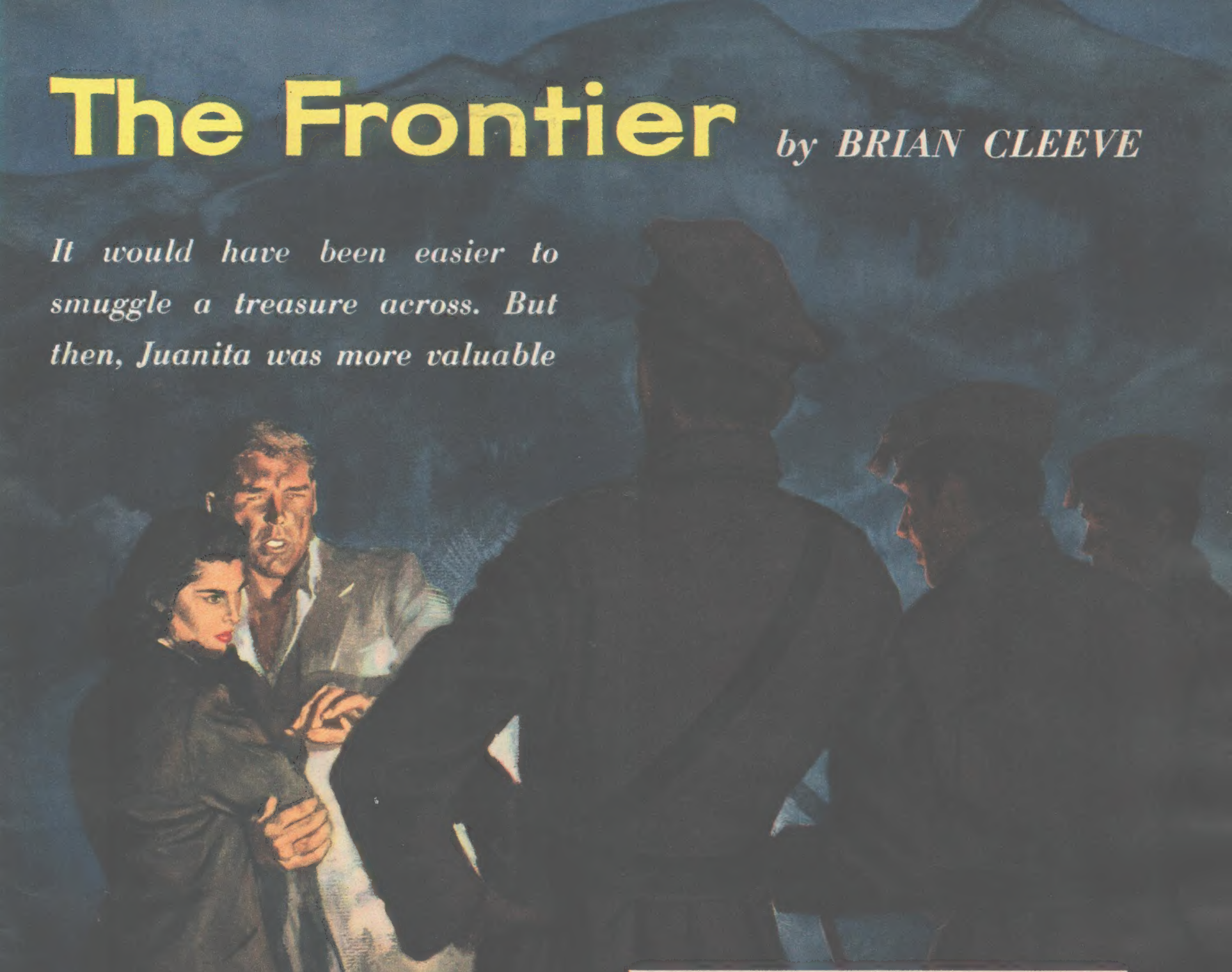
THE COVER

WITH late summer sunshine comes the promise of bramble jelly and apple-and-blackberry pie. So it's as well that in Britain copses and hedgerows are laden with berries just waiting to be raided by cheerful family outings. It's different in New Zealand, where blackberries are classed as "noxious weeds"; or in America, where they are an industry worth millions, and so are treated with respect. Now Mays is wondering just which of these attitudes the bull in his cover picture is likely to adopt. . . . So, of course, is Father.

The Frontier

by BRIAN CLEEVE

It would have been easier to smuggle a treasure across. But then, Juanita was more valuable



Now the stillness was the worst. I could feel their eyes on my back as I passed them, edging my way across the square through the quiet, too-quiet crowd of strikers. But no one spoke. Not even my own men from the silos; men who knew how I felt, knew what I thought about their wages, their work conditions, their poverty.

I looked back over my shoulder at the governor's palace, and the rifle barrels of the soldiers at the windows winked like blind eyes in the sunlight. Beyond the palace roof I could see the white tops of the silos against the dazzling blue of the South American sky; and, beyond them again, the blue-white peaks of the mountains of the frontier.

I came to the edge of the crowd. Across the square the two wheat lorries the strikers had abandoned on their way to the silos lay in the full glare of the sun. It was those that had brought me out. Unless I drove them into the yard myself, they'd be stripped to the chassis before morning. I started out across the naked square towards them, and then stopped, feeling the pressure of five hundred pairs of eyes on me. I wondered how many guns there were in the crowd.

You're crazy, I told myself. What are those lorries to you? You don't own them. You're only an employee. What are you looking for—a medal? But

"Good evening," a voice said. The torch beam blinded me as on either side of the road I heard the click of rifle bolts

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

We climbed steadily, our feet bleeding, painfully dragging ourselves up by tree roots and jutting boulders. "Only a little while more," I said; but I didn't believe it any longer

I never did like to see good equipment ruined. I started walking again, feeling the tension building behind me. Forty yards . . . thirty. I could hear them now; five hundred people murmuring. And I knew that, as soon as one man broke that murmuring with a shout, they'd come for me.

Why hadn't I stayed safe in the yard? For the matter of that, why had I ever come out to this infernal country to be engineer and bottle-washer and dry nurse to the Santa Ana silos?

Twenty yards. Fifteen. Behind me the murmuring rose a decibel, and then, suddenly, there was silence. I froze where I stood and shut my eyes. This is it, I thought. Please God it's quick.

But the silence stretched into seconds, and into the middle of it there came a new sound. Hoofbeats. Two horses. I opened my eyes again and saw two people riding into the square. One of them was Don Carlos de Medina y Santa Ana—owner of the silos, of the ground the town itself stood on, of the wheat and cattle ranches that stretched for a hundred miles along the foothills of the frontier range. The other was his niece, Juanita.

They came riding into the square as if it was the paddock of their home *estancia*. Even the horses walked as if they knew that their owners were grandees. Don Carlos saw me and nodded, and the girl made the slightest inclination of her head. She rode like a queen, and everything about her was black: black coat; black skirt over her riding slacks; black hair coiled like jet under the black brim of her sombrero.

In front of them the crowd had gathered into a solid wall of men, quiet as death, their faces stone hard with hatred. This thin, grey man in front of them still had a king's power over them. Governors had come and gone but, for as long as most of them could remember, Don Carlos had been the real ruler between the river and the mountains.

Then, at the back of the crowd, a woman shouted. It was a high scream of hatred. Another followed, and another. I saw the stallion rear in terror. As he reared a man ran from the crowd under his belly, a knife in his hand.

Uselessly, I started running.

The girl had seen him too. She leaned forward and her quirt hissed through the air. The man crumpled as she hit him.

A roar of anger ran through the square and the crowd surged forward. The girl and her father spurred their horses. I saw men falling under the silver hooves and in the same second the rifles began their chattering staccato from the palace windows, firing into the crowd. There was a stampede of men running, their faces wild with fear.

And then, as swiftly as the violence had begun, it ended. Over by the white stone steps of the palace Don Carlos and his niece seemed to be watching at their ease, still on horseback, sitting like dark statues.

I walked over to Don Carlos, who smiled at me, smoothing his finger tips down the sweating ebony neck of the stallion.

"He is not used to such behaviour," he said. "I thank you for trying to help us." He swung himself down out of the saddle. "Your bravery was an encouraging sign for me because we have come into town for one reason only—to ask your help. Let us go inside."

I held the mare's head while the girl slipped to the ground. When she was standing, her eyes were almost on a level with my own. She had high cheekbones and a pale skin that the sun had barely touched.

Two soldiers took the horses, and we went up the steps into the palace.

"They have begun looting already," said Don Carlos as he led the way into a room which had been turned into a shambles. "We have not much time. By tomorrow this riff-raff," he gestured towards the door, and the soldiers beyond it, "will have joined the revolutionaries."

He dusted a chair with his handkerchief for Juanita, and another for himself before sitting down. "Now to business," he said. "What I have to ask you is very simple, and should not be dangerous. I want you to take the best vehicle you have and drive with it to the frontier with one passenger."

I looked at the girl and the blood flared in her face. "My niece," said Don Carlos, nodding. "I trust that I shall survive this revolution as I have survived others, but I should not like anything to happen which would make mere survival worthless."

"Isn't she safe on the *estancia*?" I asked.

He shrugged. "Perhaps. Hitherto I have always trusted my gauchos. Now I am no longer sure. What is your answer?"

I looked at the girl, feeling almost sorry for her. She was clearly shamed and furious at the prospect of being handed over like a parcel of jewellery to a man whose existence she had scarcely deigned to notice until now.

I said: "If the señorita wishes to be driven anywhere, I shall be glad to drive her."

The girl looked down. "I ask you to drive me across the frontier," she said dully.

"Then that is that," Don Carlos said in a very relieved voice. "When will you start?"

"As soon as it's dark," I said. "Is the señorita bringing no luggage?"

"We have arranged that," said Don Carlos. "It will be at Mile Fifteen with two of my most trusted gauchos. Emergency passports, and such money as I wish you to have, are in this envelope."

I took the envelope and went to the window. Already the square was full of shadows. Somewhere far away I could hear shouting from a thousand angry throats.

"We'll take one of the lorries out there," I said. "Will you order some of the soldiers to bring petrol out?"

Don Carlos went to the door, while I stayed by the window, listening to the noise of the partially dispersed mob. He came back ten minutes later.

"The petrol is ready, whenever you are," he said. "It will be dark in twenty minutes."

"We can go now," I said. "The sooner the better, from the sound of that mob."

We went down the steps and across the square together. Behind us two small soldiers pattered, their breath grunting softly, a drum of petrol slung on webbing straps between them.

"I'll check the engine," I said, "and tip the wheat after I've turned her round. If you want to say goodbye. . . ."

Don Carlos and his niece walked away, the one as slim and straight as the other, and for ten minutes I had no time to think of them.

They came back as I tightened the cap of the petrol tank.

"You don't want to come too?" I asked Don Carlos.

He only laughed. "Do you think I have fortunes invested in New York and London?" he said. "All the wealth I have is here." He spread his hands in a small, almost apologetic gesture, as if his land had diminished to the ground he stood on. "The only treasure that I have you will be taking with you." He pushed Juanita towards me, very gently.

We boarded the lorry. "Goodbye. Be gentle to her," he whispered. And then he was gone. . . .

We swung off the main road towards the mountains as the early night streamed past. Away to the right a scarlet flower seemed to be growing in the dark velvet sky.

"They are burning the town," said Juanita in a dead empty voice.

But I was watching something else—two moving specks of yellow light behind us. They were headlights. I put my foot down and we shot forward.

Juanita had seen them too. "The soldiers," she said. "They must have heard my uncle say

Continued on page 29

A fantastic blunder launches the Coppists

by BILL STRUTTON
and MICHAEL PEARSON

It was an incredible invasion. Troops landed on the wrong beaches and trucks were bogged in the sand. So Whitehall sent for Willmott: "Train fifty teams at once"

Two men, unaware that their greatest and most exciting adventure was about to begin, looked shorewards through the periscope of the British submarine United. One of them, Lieutenant Bob Smith, said confidently: "It's a piece of cake."

Said the other, Sub-lieutenant David Brand: "We won't even have to leave our canoe."

The submarine, out from Malta on a February evening in 1943, was submerged in a bay on the south side of Sicily, and the men were studying a sandbar. Long and treacherous, lying just below the surface, it was off a beach which had been picked for the Allied invasion of Sicily. As Coppists—members of Combined Operations Pilotage Parties, a top-secret naval unit—Smith and Brand specialized in scouting invasion beaches. That sandbar could wreck assault boats; they had to make a close examination of it.

They thought that their chief danger would be from sentries patrolling the beach. But, when darkness came and the United surfaced, they found that their real enemy was the weather. As they mapped the sandbar from their canoe, they rode on a mounting, choppy sea.

Three hours later, at midnight, the wind had reached gale force. Brand had to struggle hard to keep the canoe head-on to it. As they emerged from the bay to rejoin the submarine the full fury of the storm hit them.

Waves towered and broke right over the canoe. The two men wielded their double-bladed paddles in a frantic battle. Smith groped for their infra-red lamp, with which it was possible to signal without showing a light visible to the naked eye. He held it up with one hand and operated it with the other. Green blips flashed across his receiver screen, but there was no recognition signal, *dot dash dot . . . dot dash dot . . .* from the submarine.

Smith lowered his aching arm and took over the fight against the sea, yelling to Brand: "Chuck in a charge!"

Brand grabbed an S.U.E. charge—resembling a hand grenade—pulled out the pin and threw the charge wide of them into the waves. They heard a thud as it exploded. Now, if the United was listening, she would at least know in which direction to find them.

But there was no sign of the submarine.

"We might be out of position," said Smith. "Let's go inshore and come out again on a proper bearing."

They turned inshore, checking their bearing on a landmark, and paddled out to sea again. The gale had worsened. An enormous white-crested wave bore down on them and one of Brand's paddle blades snapped off.

They even dared to show the light of a torch to the open sea, flashing it in a wide arc. They threw their remaining charges overboard, and heard them go off. But in the howling gloom around them they could not see the United.

Their only hope now was to paddle ten miles out to their alternative rendezvous.

It took them three hours. Dawn came, and though they scanned the horizon each time the canoe rose on a high-lifting wave, the submarine had vanished.

At about 8 a.m. Smith straightened wearily. "Either we go inshore and give ourselves up," he said, "or we paddle for Malta." It had long been a grim joke among Coppists that if they didn't find their submarines they could always paddle home.

"I'd rather paddle to hell than go in," Brand replied.

"How far is Malta?"

There was a silence in front while Brand battled to meet a wave. He yelled back: "About seventy-five miles. What do you say?"

"Look what the canoe's stood up to already."

Brand was with him. "All right. Let's have a bash."

SMITH got out their canvas escape map. He took a back-bearing on the distant cone of Mount Etna and worked out a course. In turn each paddled while the other baled. And each felt that once he stopped, his aching muscles might seize up and obey him no more.

By mid-afternoon they were succumbing to exhaustion. Their stomachs were knotting agonizingly with cramp. Brand had a hip wound barely healed. It had chosen this moment to declare itself. The pain began searing him. He knew that if he unclenched his teeth he would scream.

The storm gathered again. The sun dipped, leaving them in a dark sea which had risen to a renewed anger. They baled like machines.

Then, an hour after sunset, a wave hit them such a whack that it tore a hole in their canopy. At that, fear and hopelessness began to overwhelm them. But still, miraculously, they stayed afloat.

About midnight the wind began to drop until it was no more than a low moaning. Brand's hip wound was master of him now. He could

Coppists usually made their sorties from a submarine. Canoes were built to ride storms and withstand battering from sunken rocks

not move, except to bale feebly with his right hand.

At last dawn came. As it spread over the sea, Smith pointed. "Look at that! *Look at that!*"

It was Malta, rising low out of the horizon ahead of them, dead on course.

The sea had relaxed into a long swell. All that morning they paddled towards the island. Early in the afternoon they saw a motor torpedo boat. Smith pulled out their tommy gun and fired a burst across her bows. Then he picked up their Aldis lamp and flashed. The M.T.B. altered course and came streaking for them.

Brand was a stretcher case, destined for weeks in hospital. But for Smith the elation of coming through safely unleashed such a sudden crazed strength that when they reached Sliema Creek he insisted that he was fit to paddle the canoe to the submarine base half a mile away.

The United had not yet returned there; she was still off Sicily. Consequently, when Smith paddled in, he found Captain George Phillips, the commander of the 10th Submarine Flotilla, staring down at him from the jetty in amazement. "Good God, man!" shouted Phillips. "What have you done with the United?"

Back in Britain, sharing the Coppists' triumph in mapping the sandbar, was Lieutenant-Commander Nigel Willmott. He was the founder of C.O.P.P. The nucleus of his unit assembled in September, 1942, when seven young officers filed into his cabin in H.M.S. Dolphin, Portsmouth. To get them he had combed the navy.

Five recruits were navigators—Neville McHarg, a quiet, rubber-faced Cumberland man, reliable as a rock; dark-haired Frederick Ponsonby; Norman Teacher, whom Willmott had met in Singapore; Lieutenant Donald "Daddy" Amer and Geoffrey Lyne, nicknamed "Thin Red." The other two, George Sinclair and Nick Hastings, just wanted to go on hazardous operations.

Hastings threw Willmott a raffish salute and grinned. He was a handsome fellow, the son of Sir Patrick Hastings, K.C., a bit of a dandy and infectiously gay.

Willmott passed round the cigarettes, aware of the intent, concerned gaze focused upon him, and announced: "We are going to North Africa to take part in Operation Torch—the biggest invasion in history. Our job will be to make sure that the assaults are made in the right places. First, we've got to find out what the beaches are like. There's only one way to do that."

He studied the men one by one. None of them said anything. "We've got to land on them for a good look round," Willmott went on. "I did that sort of thing myself at Rhodes, and I'm going to teach you how to do it. After that we've got to guide assault craft into those beaches. Navigators will pilot the first waves in on to markers, who will be others of you, sitting in canoes close offshore with lights or some sort of beacon."

He paused and added in his gentle voice: "I'm afraid it's all rather bad for the nerves. Sitting in a canoe off an enemy beach isn't much fun. You'll be squatting there long enough to have all sorts of weird thoughts. And you'll be in possession of information that the enemy would give anything to get hold of. It will be inadvisable for you to be captured."

Willmott watched it all sink in. "If any of you don't feel cut out for it, I shall understand."

They just eyed him stonily and said nothing. Then Hastings stirred. "And a very fine set of marker buoys they made," he said briskly.

Willmott had to laugh. Hastings was a little outrageous. He might have to be restrained.

Nick Hastings was a gay, witty recruit to the team. When Willmott met him he thought that his outrageous humour might need restraining

THE next day they started work. Peremptory orders came from Combined Operations headquarters that Ponsonby was not to be spared for the actual operation, so he was given the job of organizing the mess. Willmott promoted McHarg to first lieutenant and made him responsible for all training. Teacher became personnel officer. Lyne became navigator to the team and so inherited all the headaches of their complex special gear. Sinclair was put in charge of stores, and Hastings was made armament officer.

It took Willmott a week to assemble enough stores to begin training.

At H.M.S. Dolphin they were in the right place, at least, for using any available submarines for training. They loaded their canoes aboard them, went out to Spithead and practised the delicate drill of jumping into their boats from the submarines' casings.

They swam long distances every day in all weathers. They spent hours examining the coasts of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight by periscope. At night there was little respite. After dark came the culminating drill—the thing that demanded more skill, more sustained alertness and endurance than any other of the new routines: the drill of beach scouting. And standing at the head of the beach was their implacable task-master, Willmott. He drove them with unrelenting sternness.

From it all came a polished and springy routine—or the beginnings of it—in record time.

The date was now September 23, and the hour the one before dawn, when the first members of the team destined to plot the North African landings climbed into a truck for the aircraft that was to take them to Gibraltar.

The last signals Willmott had received showed clearly that the naval staff at Gibraltar thoroughly disagreed with beach reconnaissance. The flag officer commanding the North Atlantic was flatly opposed to it.

Four days after arriving, the party was due to leave on its submarine sortie to scout the invasion beaches. There were two submarines —one to work the Oran beaches; the other to take Willmott and Amer to beaches near Algiers.

Willmott went to bed fairly early. He knew he would need the rest. He was awoken by a hand shaking him. It was Captain George Voelcker, commander of the 8th Submarine Flotilla, Gibraltar. He had an Admiralty signal in his hand and he didn't look happy.

The Admiralty was standing fast on its orders issued a week before forbidding Willmott and his men actually to land and explore the beaches.

Willmott pulled on his boots. "Periscopes only, eh?" he said grimly. "And what we don't see from the periscopes, we'll leave the poor infantry to find out." He pulled out a signal pad and scribbled off a curt message to the Admiralty. It said that he could no longer guarantee the landing positions.

Tensely, Lyne and Thomas listened as their

As Willmott anticipated, surveying the long low-lying North African coastline in a submarine was nothing compared with the excitement of landing.

As far as could be seen, the scheduled beaches outside Algiers and Oran looked harmless enough—except one. It was backed by tall cliffs, with no exits for transport or tanks. On this beach plans had cheerfully been made to land a motorized division. So the periscope reconnaissance was of some use.

Sketching the beaches took nearly a fortnight. On the same afternoon that Willmott and his companions got back to their depot ship in Gibraltar, the rest of their team arrived from England. In fourteen days they were due to join the second phase of the job—guiding the invasion force to the correct beaches. . . .

Willmott's three pathfinder submarines nosed their way out of Gibraltar through a curtain of rain which pitted the heavy Mediterranean swell. The invasion was to involve nearly four

interrogator gave his decision. The interpreter announced: "As spies you may be executed"

Willmott in a rubber suit designed for Copp swimmers. On an icy January day he waded into the sea to test it—and found that it leaked

hundred ships. To cover it, Atlantic convoys had been stripped to minimum escorts. Every fighting ship that could be spared had either arrived or was on its way to the Mediterranean. More than six hundred planes had been mustered for air cover, not counting those of the Fleet Air Arm. Operation Torch had started.

In darkness, two days before the invasion, the pathfinder submarines held a rehearsal off the African coast. They surfaced and released canoes. Each canoe carried a navigator and a marker. The idea of the rehearsal was to let the navigator show the marker the canoe's correct position just off the beach. From there, at zero hour on the invasion night, the markers would begin flashing their torches seawards.

The submarine, meanwhile, would withdraw eight miles out and hoist beacons. Around these the approaching armada would rally and lower assault boats. The navigator would transfer to a boat and lead the final stage of the long journey in, during which the marker would continue to signal where the beach lay.

At Oran, during the rehearsal, two teams speared inshore at separate points from their submarines, gliding through a total, eerie calm. They stroked delicately, their eyes questing this way and that in the dark.

Then one of the teams, Thomas Edwards and Rollo Magnall, heard a sound that pierced the darkness around them. They paused apprehensively. The sound grew into the throbbing of a motor-launch on their starboard bow. The shape of the launch—a thirty-footer with a deckhouse aft—loomed towards and across them.

She stopped and swung, heading round, then came on steadily at a ten-knot chug. With a quiet desperation the canoeists manoeuvred to swing stern-on and present their smallest silhouette to the launch.

Edwards leaned forward and groped under the canopy for their tommy gun. Magnall undid his revolver holster. They both froze as the launch bore down on them. The gap closed—a hundred yards, seventy yards, fifty. . . . She must have spotted them.

Thirty yards away the launch stopped and lay there drifting. The current bore along both the launch and canoe together. It seemed incredible that the canoe could not be seen. Edwards and Magnall groped for comfort by recollecting how hard it had been, in exercises off Gibraltar, to spot a canoe at night when it lay end-on.

Then, to port, they heard faintly the engines of another boat. The two men sat motionless, not risking even a movement of their heads to look round. The second boat drew nearer on their port side. The noise of its engine grew so loud they expected to be run down. But as the throbbing reached a crescendo, the boat turned away. They heard it fade towards the coast.

Magnall risked a peep at the launch still behind them. In the wheelhouse a match flared as one of the crew lit a cigarette. Edwards decided to move. He touched Magnall and very gently, to avoid stirring any phosphorescence, they stroked the water with their paddles. Gradually they moved away, while the launch stayed where it was, obviously on the watch but incredibly unseeing. . . .

Some two hundred miles to the east, bald-headed "Daddy" Amer battled through rough water on the edge of a storm area with his marker, Nick Hastings. Willmott himself was out, carving grimly over the wind-licked crests, bearing with him a somewhat startled young sub-lieutenant, Noel Cooper, on a hair-raising voyage of introduction to his sector.

"Thin Red" Lyne and his marker, Peter Thomas, had the bad luck to meet the worst of the storm. As soon as they left their submarine they felt a long heavy swell beneath their canoe. Sharp warning gusts caught and twisted their paddles. Then suddenly the storm broke.

All night they paddled and baled, being swept hour by hour farther from their submarine.

The dawn broke greyly. The wind dropped, and Lyne and Thomas stared about them out of reddened eyes. They were on a wave-crest

Continued on page 20

My school sets its pride to music

by RUDOLPH SABOR

Some people brand these girls as failures. Well, they did fail once, at an exam. Then I put a song in their hearts—and set them on their way to national fame

Sabor's soloists are Ann Chamberlain and Diana Wade. Next term Ann (left) will study at the London College of Music

THE recital room in the Royal Festival Hall, London, was filled to capacity. Around me at the piano, twenty-four young girls in white blouses and grey skirts sang merrily. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw one of the girls' faces paling with faintness.

Cautiously, so that she would not attract attention to herself, the girl, whose name is Betty Benge, edged away from the group towards the side of the stage. But she didn't stop singing until, reaching the wings, she fell fainting from heat and excitement into the arms of a waiting teacher.

Betty was out cold for five minutes, but she insisted on rejoining the choir for the final part of the programme. That is the spirit that the girls of my choir have developed.

It's not too bad for a bunch of "failures." And all our girls have failed in the sense that they were rejected by the eleven-plus exam. Instead of receiving a grammar school education, they are students of Chessington County Secondary Girls' School in Surrey.

We call ourselves the Chessingers and we sing for the love of it. In a year we spend more than four hundred hours rehearsing our songs before, between and after school hours. We can sing sixty songs from memory and we have sixty more coming into our repertoire.

I think I can say that the Chessingers are helping to remove the stigma unfairly attached to secondary modern schools.

There's no sign "Abandon Hope All Ye Who Enter Here" at our school. Instead there's a cheerful confidence, and a good part of it comes from pride in the school choir. In the past year, the Chessingers have given a dozen outside public concerts, and a few months ago we made our television début.

The National Eisteddfod is our goal next year and, if it can be arranged, we hope to tour Scandinavia to show what Britain's secondary modern students can do.

Our ambition to raise the prestige of the secondary modern school, is not an isolated one. At Dempsey Secondary School in Stepney, London, one of the teachers, Kenneth Stanley, is using drama classes to obtain the same objective with eleven-plus failures that we reach through music.

Stanley was sent to Stepney to improve the children's speech. In three years he has succeeded in making the entire school drama conscious. Children who were not well-behaved have been attracted to stage work and have subsequently become model students.

When one of the Dempsey drama groups entered a local festival more than sixty youngsters, who could ill afford the money, paid for tickets to see their school team perform. One of Stanley's discoveries is a Cypriot boy who could scarcely speak English three years ago. The youngster has become such a promising actor that it is hoped that he will be accepted for training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

At Chessington we have an artist of the future, too. She is Ann Chamberlain, the choir secretary, whose fine mezzo-soprano voice has won her a place at the London College of Music. Ann took her General Certificate of Education at our school this year and now she is to train for a musical career at the London College.

In York, Melvin Kneebone, the headmaster at Beckfield County Secondary Modern School, has introduced a wide range of activities, both during and after school, hours which demonstrate the advantages of secondary modern schools and help to remove the slur that they only exist for failures.

Pupils at Beckfield go on educational visits to other schools. They have a natural history society, as well as art, pet, stamp, railway, and cycling and other sports clubs.

SOMEONE once told Kneebone: "If you want to know the difference between grammar and other schools, you have only to see what happens at four o'clock any afternoon. Within five minutes the other schools are empty, while in the grammar schools many games and club activities are about to begin."

That certainly is not true of many secondary modern schools today. At Chessington four o'clock is the beginning of an hour's choir practice every day. Before that we have already had a rehearsal from 8.40 a.m. until 9 a.m. and for thirty-five minutes after lunch.

These extra hours involve sacrifices by the girls and their parents. About eighty per cent of the girls' mothers go out to work and they count on their daughters to have tea ready on their return. Choir practice sometimes means a late tea for those families, but the parents are among our most enthusiastic supporters.

Parental permission to stay after school was one of the first conditions made when the choir

The Chessingers were founded by Sabor three years ago. "Voices are like wine," he says. "When I heard these girls I knew I was on to a good vintage"

was formed three years ago. The other requirements were passing an audition and a promise to attend rehearsals faithfully.

About ninety-five girls volunteered for the auditions. We decided on a concert strength of twenty-four, with reserves to bring up the total to forty.

At first there were a few who dropped out because "I must be home in time for TV." I don't hear that excuse any longer. One earnest youngster came to me with her resignation because "Mum says singing spoils my voice." Mum changed her mind after she heard the choir sing.

The first big decision was the choice of songs. I have always liked folk songs because they are fun to sing. The girls liked them, too, and they asked for more of them—and for longer rehearsals to practise them.

The girls also made their own suggestions. One of them hummed a tune that she had heard on the radio. I recognized it as a fragment of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, music which it had not yet occurred to me as a music master to suggest. We got the score and now it is one of our favourite pieces.

We use the same formation as the Vienna Boys' Choir, with all the singers grouped around the piano. Every eye is fixed on me at the piano and it would take a real explosion to divert the girls' attention. I have tested this by having a colleague slip into a rehearsal unannounced and drop a pile of books. The first time he did this, several of the girls jumped and looked round to see what had happened. Now they are all drilled to ignore any kind of diversion.

No discipline is needed. The girls enjoy singing and I have expelled only one member—because she skipped an evening rehearsal to go to the cinema.

About a quarter of our rehearsal time is spent listening to other choirs on records from the girls' own or the school collection. Sometimes we make our own tape recordings of radio programmes so that we can study the singing together.

We haven't always had a tape recorder. We used to hire one so that we could hear our own voices. It worked all right until we decided that we were good enough to ask a record company for an audition. To support our request, we made a recording on the hired machine. Then we sent it off to a firm that re-recorded the tape on a disc.

There was no reply from the record company for a long time, and our spirits sank. Finally the disc came back with a note of regret. We played it over and discovered that the transfer from tape to disc had played tricks on us by registering two notes below the original pitch. Our lively "Yulishka Under The Lilac Tree" sounded like a funeral march.

We decided that we must have our own tape recorder and that we would pay for it by singing. Early last summer it was agreed to invest £25 in booking a recital room at the Royal Festival Hall. The earliest available date was Friday, December 7.

This was an ambitious project for a group of girls from an unknown suburban school. But they responded to the challenge. We had extra rehearsals on Saturdays and sometimes on Sundays. For nine members of the choir this meant giving up their weekend jobs. A girl can earn 6s. or more for a half-day's work in a chain store, and turning this down for a choir rehearsal is no small sacrifice.

Chessington pupil Wendy Norbury stitches a blouse. The school dressmaking class worked on the choir's uniform costumes

At the dress rehearsal Arthur Bosworth, the music publisher, came to hear us. His firm published "The Happy Wanderer," a song made famous all over the world by the young German Obernkirchen choir. Bosworth told us that with encouragement we could come up to the standard of the German choir.

As a mark of his appreciation he offered to publish the words and music of four of the songs that I arranged and for which I wrote the words. When the royalties were joined with the returns from the concert we had more than enough to pay for our expenses and to purchase a new and reliable tape recorder.

Two agents offered to book engagements for us. B.B.C. Television invited us to appear. We made our début in May and appeared again in July.

Some of my colleagues feared that the choir girls' school work might suffer. That hasn't happened. In fact, there's a feeling among the choir girls that they must set an example to the rest of the school.

What has happened is that two thirteen-year-old members who were eligible for an exam that would qualify them for grammar school places have decided to forego this opportunity. One girl, who did leave us to go to a grammar school, sent her mother to see me to find out whether it would be possible to rejoin the choir. We had to turn her down.

Through appearances in local churches, halls and at music festivals, our reputation has spread through the primary schools which send their children on to Chessington County Secondary Girls' School. And I think we have done something to remove the bogy of secondary modern schools, not only from the minds of children facing the eleven-plus exam, but from the minds of their parents, too.

If they do not win grammar school places at the next eleven-plus exam they will not feel condemned as failures. They will come to "the school with the choir."

At recent music festivals in the district, the girls have won eighteen medals or certificates. And there's one more point that I can't help mentioning: the Chessingers have never been beaten by a grammar school choir. THE END

John Sollars looked angrily towards Tim, and then turned back to Marianne. "Good night, miss," he said

September Moon

by JOHN MOORE

ILLUSTRATED BY BATCHELOR

Of course Marianne had wanted to be with Tim: she loved him. Yet now, in his home, she was feeling afraid

BOTRYTIS . . . for Tommy Tomkins at the Hope Farm the word could spell ruin. The blight was spreading rapidly through the Herefordshire hopyards—and Tommy had banked on a successful hop harvest.

The Hope was in a bad way: Tommy, feckless and happy-go-lucky, was nearly bankrupt. His earnest, prudish brother George had come down from London to go over the farm's accounts. It seemed likely that George would foreclose Tommy's mortgage; he certainly would if the hops failed.

At the Hope and at Sollarshill Manor Farm —owned by Tommy's neighbour, John Sollars— the hop pickers raced to gather in the harvest before the blight reached this part of the country. The pickers were Midland folk, Welsh girls and two rival gipsy gangs: Black Herbie's ragtags at the Hope and Wisdom Lee's lot at the Manor.

Neighbours though they were, there was little contact between John Sollars and Tommy. Neither knew of the romance that was budding between young Tim Sollars and Tommy's pretty daughter Marianne.

It had begun, that sparking of interest, when

Tommy's scrubby cattle broke through his badly maintained boundary fence and joined the Sollars's herd of pedigree Herefords. Tim had helped Marianne to separate the herds and repair the gap in the fence.

The following day, Stan—a boy who worked at the Hope—came to her with the news that one of the cows was sick. Saliva was dripping from its nose and, Marianne saw with horror, there were streaks of blood on its legs.

Tommy had gone to see his bank manager that morning; she realized that Tim was the only person she could turn to. . . .

"I want you to find Mr. Sollars, young Mr. Sollars, and tell him what's happened and ask him to come down quickly," she told the boy. "And run, Stan, please. . . ."

PART THREE

Killer Bugs At The Hope

STAN went off at a gangling lope. While she waited, Marianne walked round the sick beast in circles. She had no idea what was the matter with it. Foot-and-mouth? If it was, the farm would be shut up and that would finish Tommy. But John Sollars's farm would be shut up, too, and perhaps all those beautiful cattle would be destroyed. And it will be all our fault, she thought: our fault, because of that fence which should have been mended.

She looked at the beast again, and now its hind legs seemed to be sagging beneath it as it stood there. It looked grotesque and terrible, its eyes rolled and what should have been the whites were a dull scarlet. Its breath came quickly and its sides heaved. Some violent fever, she could see, was burning it up inside.

Then Tim came, well ahead of Stan, through the gate by the signpost. He crossed the field with those damned great arrogant strides, stopped dead and gazed at the beast.

As he gazed, the beast's hindquarters suddenly gave way. It toppled over and lay with its forelegs crumpled, half on its side. Its mouth was open and its soft brown eyes, strangely gentle against the scarlet which rimmed them, were turned towards Marianne. She could fancy a helpless plea in those eyes, and instinctively she stepped towards the dying creature.

Her hand was outstretched to pat its head, an absurd and futile gesture. She had nearly touched it—when suddenly Tim's hands were about her waist and she felt herself lifted clean off her feet as he swung her round.

"Don't touch it," he said.

He held her so hard that it hurt, and carried her back with him, three or four paces. When he set her down again, she looked back at the beast and knew that it was dead.

She turned to Tim: "Why did you. . . ?" And Tim, without saying anything, pointed to the beast. She saw what she hadn't noticed before, a lot of blood on its nose and in the saliva.

"Did you touch it?" said Tim.

"No. . . . I don't think so. . . . No."

"We must get the vet. I'll come up to your house and phone him, if you like." He turned to Stan: "Stay here, keep the other cattle away from it. Don't go near it yourself."

They went up to the house. Marianne showed Tim the phone and he said: "Does it work?" and suddenly they both laughed.

She said: "Yes, he's paid."

Tim got the number and asked for the vet. . . . "Hallo. Tim Sollars, but I'm speaking from the Hope Farm. They've got a dead beast here. Can you possibly come out straight away? It might be blackquarter, but I think it's anthrax. . . ."

Marianne said: "Oh Lord, how awful! Your cattle, Tim! How infectious?"

"Not very. Only the blood, I think. Are you sure you didn't touch it?"

"Yes. . . . You were so quick, I couldn't."

"Well, to be on the safe side, wash like mad. Got some disinfectant?"

"No, but I bet my Uncle George has." She ran upstairs and knocked at George's door. There was no answer, so she went in. There were about a dozen different bottles ranged on George's dressing-table: tonics and vitamin pills and aspirin and chlorodyne and stomach powder and hair restorer. On the washstand there was a bottle of disinfectant. She took it and went down into the little wash-place under the stairs.

She left the door open and Tim came in with her. "Scrub," he said.

"Fusspot."

"These are rather special bugs, that's all."

"My Uncle George will be terrified."

"Who's he?"

"Father's brother. He's got the mortgage on the farm. He's down here because"—she paused for a moment: but there was surely no harm in telling Tim—"because he's thinking of selling us up."

Tim didn't say anything. He looked at her gravely and nodded. She dried her hands and said: "But he's frightened of bugs, so perhaps he'll go away."

"Now you smell like a nurse," said Tim. He smiled suddenly and put out his hands and took her by her elbows. He drew her towards him and she put up her face and he kissed her lightly on the mouth. He held her for just a moment, and then they both went out.

Tim picked up his hat off the hall table and said briskly: "I must get back to the hopyard. Father's in a flap—we're picking in a hurry because of botrytis—you've heard about it? He'll be in more of a flap when I tell him about this. But I'll come over as soon as we've finished picking and hear what the vet said."

He shoved his hat on the back of his head and was gone. . . .

The vet, who was small, bespectacled and without assurance when he got out of his car, pulled a pair of gumboots over his well-creased trousers, put on a white coat and rubber gloves, picked up his black bag and was suddenly transformed into a figure of authority. They had driven down to the meadow, where Stan faithfully stood guard over the dead beast.

A mongrel collie, originally a stray, which had attached itself to Stan and followed him everywhere, was sniffing at the carcass. It was a disreputable and scavenging dog, and it had apparently been rolling, too: there was muck and blood on its coat. It hadn't occurred to Stan to stop it, but now the vet said sharply: "Call off that dog," and Stan whistled it to heel. Then the vet walked round the carcass slowly and said: "Young Tim's made a good diagnosis; let's see if we confirm it."

HE bent over the beast and took one of its ears between the tips of his forefinger and thumb. He pricked it with a quick stab and smeared some blood on a glass slide. Then he went back to his car and Marianne watched him staining the blood with some blue stuff out of a bottle. "Now we'll have a look," he said, and set up a small microscope on the bonnet of the car. He peered through the eye-piece and adjusted the screws. At last he said: "Well, there they are. Beautiful."

"The bugs?" said Marianne.

"Yes. The methylene stains them blue and the capsules go purple."

"Can I look?"

"You're not dressed for the job and B. anthracis is a nasty character."

"It's anthrax, then?"

"Yes. You must fence off that carcass. Bit of wire and some stakes. I'll notify the police and they'll come along with flame-throwers and burn it."

"What about the other cattle?" she asked.

"Not much risk. Your father bought them at market? Contaminated foodstuffs is the usual cause; and sometimes the bugs lie dormant in the ground. It's generally just an isolated case. But I shall have to destroy that dog."

"Oh . . . Stan's collie?"

"I'm sorry. It was licking the thing's nose."

"How awful. Stan's not quite . . . you know . . . and I think that dog's the only thing he cares about. *Must* you? Couldn't you wait and see if it——"

"No. It's been rolling in the stuff. Coat, pads, mouth, all infectious. It's a walking menace. Anthrax is a killer and I'm not prepared to take any chances with it. Sorry." He was sharp and professional, putting away his microscope, packing the things into his black bag.

Marianne knew it was no good saying any more, so she went and told Stan, but he didn't understand. She told him again, and then again, and all the time the dog was a few feet away, sitting on its haunches, looking up at him. She tried to use very short words: "The vet thinks he may catch the illness from the dead beast: then he would die, and it would hurt him very much. And he might give the illness to people—and to you, Stan, and then you might die too. . . ."

Stan's lips began to quiver and he looked at her, not in anger or resentment, but in fear, as if she were the agent of the Power that had taken all the things he wanted away from him always. He leaned down with his arms bent protectively, as if he would defend the dog.

"Don't touch it," she cried, and Stan at last

Continued on page 24

The room fell silent, and very quietly Wisdom said to Tim: "I think you'd better get your young lady away"

The Queen's favourite portrait painter

by JEROME HOOD

Famous, noble and royal faces are the fortune of Edward Halliday. For his art's sake he will shout at a sitter—or impersonate the gas man

Visiting Britain this year, two of Mrs. Pandit's daughters saw Halliday's portrait of their mother, who is the High Commissioner for India in London

THE Duke of Edinburgh, wandering round an artist's studio in St. John's Wood, London, stopped short before a large portrait of the Queen. To the perturbation of the artist, Edward Halliday, he then stepped forward, examined it more closely, and turned sharply.

"I don't think my wife would ever wear a frock like that," he said. "The colour's wrong."

Halliday, taking a deep breath, explained that the portrait had been commissioned by the Cunard company for the liner Caronia, and that after seeing samples of the carpets and curtains in the saloon, where it was to hang, he had decided that the composition needed a rich splash of salmon-pink—the colour of the Queen's gown in his painting.

"But she hasn't got a frock that colour," the Duke said.

"No, sir," Halliday agreed. The Queen had sat for him in a gown of grey slipper-satin.

"H'm," said the Duke, and left it at that.

The Queen, visiting the studio a few days later, inspected the picture for several minutes without comment. Halliday, fearing the worst, said nothing. But when, later, the Queen, cup of tea in hand, walked over to examine the portrait again, he thought he might risk a comment.

"The gown, ma'am," he said hesitantly, "is the exact shade used by Gainsborough in his portrait of the Countess Howe at Kenwood. I hope you like it."

The Queen, silent a few seconds longer, suddenly sighed. "How I wish I had a frock like that!" she said.

The incident, Halliday feels, expresses perfectly the two most immediate characteristics of the Queen and her husband: the Duke's directness—and his desire to see his wife in soft pastel shades; the Queen's control—and quietly-revealed femininity.

Edward Irvine Halliday, fifty-four years old and President of the Royal Society of British Artists, has had ample opportunity to observe both sets of characteristics. Since 1948, when he received his first royal commission—a portrait of the then Princess Elizabeth for the Drapers' Company—he has painted the Queen more often than any other artist. Fourteen portraits and innumerable "plots and plans" for portraits testify to his absorption in the subject.

A sleek, erect figure with crisp, silvery hair, light blue eyes, trim moustache and a long face whose expression has been variously described as resembling a bored seal and a weary sheep, Halliday has come a long way since the days, just before the war, when he had to pawn his watch regularly to keep the wolf from the door.

At sittings Halliday paints the head and shoulders only. Clothes—such as Churchill's garter knight robes—are generally copied later

Today the wolves are gone and Halliday, debonair in his working rig of grey flannel trousers and a blue smock with toggles, comes to the door only to welcome the lions of society. These have included Sir Winston Churchill, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sir Edmund Hillary and the Mountbattens.

For his vice-regal portrait, Earl Mountbatten showed himself a model sitter—"except that he never sat," Halliday says. "He would appear bang on the dot, take up his standing position and maintain it without moving, keeping up an interested conversation until time was up. Then, bang on the dot again, he would step down. Operation Portrait was over for the week."

Although Halliday was painting only the head and shoulders at these sittings—clothes, draped on a model, are usually painted later—the ex-viceroy insisted on donning his robes. The entire uniform, with sashes, chains, stars and decorations, was kept in a wardrobe for him. Every

From the master portrait of the Queen which he painted at Windsor, Halliday paints larger portraits by commission

Halliday and his secretary, Miss Ann Ashton, with the preliminary studies of Prince Philip, Churchill and the Queen

week he would change in an upstairs bedroom and descend the stairs in full glory to the immense awe of anyone waiting in the hall.

Halliday is used to looking after splendid robes for his more eminent sitters. One set of garter robes at present in the studio belongs to Sir Winston Churchill. They are for use in a portrait commissioned by the New Zealand Parliament—the last portrait that Churchill will allow to be painted of himself—which is giving the artist his biggest headache yet. Knowing Churchill's dislike of old age, Halliday's problem is to show him as he is and yet reveal the wartime bulldog.

"Some of the old pugnacity is still there," Halliday says, "but a curious change has come over the face lately. I noticed it while making preliminary sketches. The right half is that of the young Churchill—shrewd, poised, confident. The left half is of the older man, who has visited lands of poetry, daring and imagination where the right-hand Churchill couldn't follow—a strange expression, sardonic, quixotic, a curious light in the eye."

During sittings Sir Winston hunches silent and sombre in his chair. Occasionally, without a word, he gets up to see how the portrait is progressing, resuming his seat with, sometimes, a gruff explanation, "Just wanted to see what you're making of it."

Another silent sitter, until Halliday got to know him, was Sir Edmund Hillary, the Everest climber. Hillary's silence was due to shyness. Before beginning his sketches, Halliday walked slowly round Hillary, closely examining the head. Hillary's face gradually reddened. "You know," he burst out at last, "this is kind of embarrassing."

"Hillary never got over the feeling that it was sissy to have his portrait painted," Halliday says, "but we became good friends and I invited him to a champagne party. He was very diffident about coming and said he'd never tasted champagne in his life. He soon acquired the taste."

One problem that faced Halliday in the Hillary portrait—which depicts the climber against a Himalayan background—was to get "mountain light" reflected on the face. He solved it by scattering white paper on the floor beneath the studio's central glass dome.

A PROBLEM of another kind was to make Nehru angry. "A colleague of his told me that to do justice to the face I must see it in a rare moment of anger. 'Then it is magnificent,' the man said, 'full of divine discontent and the spirit of resurgent India.'"

Halliday, who feels that a portrait should express every facet of a sitter's personality, agreed that it would be a good idea, and waited for the Indian prime minister to fly into a temper. He waited patiently for over two months at Nehru's New Delhi home, where he was a guest. But there were no tantrums. "Even at breakfast, a temperamental meal the world over, he was always the same—courteous, smiling, solicitous."

As the weeks went by, Halliday himself grew irritable at this nobility of character, and devised a scheme. Arranging for a photographer to be nearby, he began to shout loudly at Nehru, and raised his hand to him.

"It was a scene of pandemonium," he recalls, "with flashbulbs going off and a good deal of noise. If ever a man had a right to be angry, it was Mr. Nehru."

But the photographs, speedily developed, were a disappointment. Each showed Halliday gesticulating fiercely—and a smiling Nehru.

Halliday, born and educated in Liverpool, started his professional career as a decorative painter after winning the Rome Prize of 1925. The prize, worth £300 a year for three years, gave him a studio in Rome, where he met his future wife, Dorothy, an English archaeology student.

Returning to England to marry, he found that decorative painting paid few bills, and turned to portraiture. He also took up art criticism both in print and on the wireless—the beginning of a broadcasting career which became important a few years later.

At this period, Halliday and his wife were living in a disused chapel in Chelsea, but when children arrived, a boy and a girl, they had to move to more orthodox living quarters. Halliday was soon on nodding terms with the local pawnbroker.

After the war, in which he served in the R.A.F., he found himself without money or commissions, and looked for teaching work. "Very luckily, my application for the post of Professor of Fine Art at Durham University was unsuccessful," he says, "because soon afterwards I saw that the B.B.C. were advertising for a newsreel commentator for the television service they were about to reopen."

Halliday applied for the job, was short-listed with twenty others, and finally got it. He became one of the best-known voices on British television until, in 1954, pressure of work compelled him to give up the job.

His failure to get the academic job in Durham was even more important than he had realized at the time for, in 1948, when the Drapers' Company was choosing an artist to paint a portrait of the then Princess Elizabeth, Halliday was available. At that time he was a practising portraitist, painting every day until 4.30 p.m., when he left for Alexandra Palace. He got the commission and has never looked back since.

Today, as one of the six most popular portraitists in the world—the others are Annigoni, Gunn, Elwes, Devas and Hepple—Halliday operates a slightly Robin Hoodish, rationing-by-price system of fees. Public companies which require boardroom portraits come at the top end of his sliding scale; impoverished gentry with a tradition of family portraits at the other end.

Women, he finds, are more difficult sitters than men. Some change their hair styles between sittings—and have to be sent back to the hairdresser. One titled woman had her face lifted, the result compelling Halliday to abandon the portrait swiftly. "Another woman, whose portrait I had undertaken only because of her wonderful natural flaxen hair, actually had it

Continued on page 24

MAN ON A STRING

Poor Gustave! He was certainly a sensation. His new act was thrilling thousands—and losing him his girl

by ***KENNETH GRENVILLE MYER***

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURENT

"Murderer!" shrieked one of the

IF you run a boarding-house or let rooms you'll begin to start making money when you can tell which suitcases have a trousseau in, and which are filled with bricks. Long before I could do that Gustave decided to make my place his permanent headquarters.

He arrived one wet Tuesday morning at about quarter-past nine looking very small and very cold. His head was wrapped in an enormous shawl, and he had a rather battered cabin trunk which certainly hadn't got bricks in it—he carried it easily with one hand as I led the way up to the second-floor back.

He wanted a small room, he said, which would be quiet—not too high up or his friends would never come to visit him, and high enough for them not to come too often. He said this with a shy smile which did something to my heart—and me old enough to be his mother.

Not that it matters, but I can't remember anyone coming to see him. He had nice eyes and strong, delicate hands. I put him down as a musician of sorts which shows how little I knew about my business then. Now, I can size a man up—or a woman—as soon as they have their foot in the door. Ours is a cut-throat profession.

Gustave paid a week's rent in advance without my asking, told me that my furnishings showed that I was a woman of considerable taste, offered me a cigarette, said he was going out shortly and if there was any shopping to be brought back, like potatoes or flour, that would be too heavy for me to carry, he would be delighted to pick it up. It would be no trouble. Of course, all this quite won my heart. No doubt it was intended to—but Gustave was quite sincere about it. He liked to be kind and thoughtful.

"When I am gone," he told me once, "people will say: 'He was kind and thoughtful. He gave pleasure to thousands and there was nothing he would not do for anyone who needed help.'" He blew the smoke out through his nose. "That shall be my epitaph." He took another pull at his cigarette and let the smoke curl out of his mouth and up his nostrils.

"You must write that down," he said. "That should be my epitaph, in case anyone asks you." And nothing would satisfy him until I got a pencil and wrote it down on the inside of a cigarette packet.

It was rather a strange conversation but I thought no more about it. I had already been in the boarding-house business long enough to know that you often have strange conversations with your boarders, even if they have been with you only a few days—and Gustave had been with me no more than that. What is more, death, and last messages, are fairly popular with boarders as conversational openings, and you soon learn to take them as nothing more than just a light-hearted attempt to pass the time of day.

So I was all the more surprised at what happened the next morning. I was doing out the ground-floor front. A couple had just left—I never liked them any more than they liked each other, so I wasn't broken-hearted when they both gave me notice separately within five minutes.

I happened to be looking out of the window when I saw two women and a girl hurrying towards me along the street. In no time at all it struck me that there was something wrong as they were none of them dressed for coming out.

I was wondering where they were going when they stopped for a minute, and counted up the number of houses from the end of the road. The girl pointed at my front door and they sprang up my steps together. The girl put her finger on the doorbell and left it there.

THAT bell nearly drove me out of my mind while I slipped downstairs and put on the velvet I usually wear in the afternoon. I ran a comb through my hair with one hand, put my ear-rings on with the other, and used half-a-dozen other hands that I didn't know I had to put on my make-up, the pearls my husband bought me the year before he died, my new nylons and court shoes. Those three out there spelled trouble of the worst kind, and if there were going to be reporters and my picture in the papers, I certainly wasn't going to be caught with the face I was born with, in my apron and wearing torn slippers.

"Yes?" I asked as I opened the door.

"There's a man hanged himself in your second-floor back," cried one of them over her shoulder as they slipped past me and ran for the stairs.

Immediately Gustave and his epitaph flashed into my mind. Poor Gustave, with his appealing eyes and his strong, delicate hands. Poor Gustave, so kind and thoughtful—where had I put that cigarette packet with the epitaph pencilled inside? Surely he hadn't done away with himself? I made for the stairs, and for all my fifty years I was leading those women as we reached Gustave's door.

The door was locked.

We banged on it. You never heard the like of that hammering; if Gustave had been shouting back at us from the other side of it, you'd never have heard him in that din. Suddenly the door was flung open, and there was Gustave, with nothing on but his trousers and vest, looking at us in astonishment.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked Gustave gently.

"Murderer!" shrieked the first of the two women.

"Where's the body you've got strung up?" cried the other.

The girl said nothing. She just stood there

women behind me. "Where's the body you've got strung up?" cried the other. But the girl said nothing: she just stood there and looked at Gustave

and looked at Gustave while the other two pushed past him and into the room.

It was empty. There was no one else, dead or alive, in that room.

I must admit it gave me a nasty turn to see what looked very much like a little portable gallows stood up in front of the window; but, instead of a rope, it had a wire dangling from it—and instead of a noose there was a lump of rubber at the end of the wire. It looked rather like the teat on a baby's bottle, only it was larger, and solid rubber. It did look rather queer and we waited for Gustave to give us an explanation.

Those gentle eyes looked round at the four of us, very slowly and very gently, then they came to rest on the girl and honestly, in this day and age, she blushed. It was very pretty to watch. It crossed my mind then that these two might very well be wanting my ground-floor front—which I only let to married couples—and that they might be in there sooner than anyone would expect, seeing them there looking at each other.

PERHAPS she felt the need to turn those eyes in some other direction. "That's my room —opposite," she said, and pointed out of the window. Across my apology of a garden was a brick wall, dividing us from what many a time I've compared to a rubbish dump: a plot filled with old tins, ashes and dust-bins, and beyond it, a house which backed on to mine. "I live in the second-floor back there," she added.

"I see," said Gustave, as if it were now all as clear as daylight. I didn't understand at all.

Perhaps they sensed it, for both began to speak at once. It seemed that the girl had been washing her hair in her room when she had seen what she had taken to be a dead man hanging from the little gallows in the window. The houses were close enough for her to recognize that man as Gustave. That was clear enough—what I didn't understand was why he should be pretending to hang himself—and in front of the window of my second-floor back, too.

Then Gustave took over. It turned out he was an acrobat, and he worked over at the amusement park, on the other side of the town. They were cutting down on expenses and they had told him they couldn't afford to keep a man who was just one of a team of acrobats—if he wanted to stay he'd have to do a solo turn as well, and the one they'd picked out for him was to hang by his teeth from a wire.

I'd like to have told the man who thought of that one a few things he didn't know about

himself. Of all the things for a gentle little chap like Gustave to have to do—it was downright barbarous.

"It's quite simple really," he was saying in that gentle voice. "You just close your teeth round that lump of rubber, and as long as you keep on biting you stay there."

But one of the women, who had turned out to be the girl's landlady, was not quite satisfied. "Show us how you do it," she said.

"Certainly," said Gustave.

"No!" cried the girl as if Gustave was somehow going to do himself an injury. "No!"

The woman gave her a scornful look and the girl went quiet. She stared, fascinated, as Gustave took one of my bedroom chairs, stood on it, tucked the rubber neatly in his mouth, bent his knees till the wire was taut, and then kicked the chair away. He straightened his legs and hung there, swaying slightly.

It was easy to see how his figure with his head stretched back might have been mistaken for a hanged man. There was a gasp from all of us and then silence. We all stood there watching, waiting—and nothing happened.

Finally, the girl's landlady, suddenly aware that Gustave could hear even if he couldn't speak, said: "Thank you very much, mister."

Immediately, Gustave opened his mouth and dropped lightly to the floor. "You see," he smiled, "it is easy—and there is no danger. . . ."

The girl's name was Doreen and we saw a lot of her in the next few weeks. Not that I would ever let her go up to Gustave's room—I don't hold with that kind of thing. Nor would her landlady permit Gustave in hers, which made their courting difficult. But whenever I was at the back I could see her at her window if Gustave was in. They'd rigged up two washing lines tied together on a couple of pulleys so that they could pass notes to one another.

One morning I noticed that Gustave's smile had gone and that the washing lines had vanished. Obviously the courting had stopped.

I liked Gustave, and Doreen seemed to me to be the right sort of girl for him; so I thought I'd put my spoke in. But first I had to find out what the trouble was.

I had to approach the subject delicately, so I asked Gustave downstairs for a cup of tea.

"How's the hanging by the teeth going?" I asked casually.

"Fine," said Gustave mournfully. "I am a great success."

He hadn't lost his job, then.

"I should like to come and see you," I said.

"No," said Gustave firmly.

"Why ever not? Would it make you nervous? To have a friend in the audience, I mean."

I was using a bit of guile there, calling myself his friend. When he knew that I regarded myself as his friend surely he would open up and tell me the lot.

"It's not that," he muttered, putting down his tea.

"Why, then?"

"You would never speak to me again."

What could be so terrible about what he was doing? I was determined to find out, if I drowned him in tea. "You know I'm very broadminded—couldn't I just see it once?" I said, coaxing him. I had visions of him hanging by his teeth among a lot of girls with nothing on. I was on to it now—of course, that would put Doreen's back up. No decent girl, unless she was brought up backstage, would understand a thing like that or be prepared to overlook it.

"You would not enjoy it."

"Too many girls performing with you, you mean?"

"No," he said, "that is not the trouble—with Doreen. That is what you want to know, isn't it? What is the trouble with Doreen? You are always very kind, so I will tell you.

"I thought Doreen would be proud of me, so I asked her to come and see me hang by my teeth. When she saw me she was very frightened, and she cried out. She said I must not do that trick again. I said that I must; it was my job. She said that if I put my job in front of her, it was all finished. Well—I had to, and it is all finished."

"But Doreen saw you do it here and she didn't mind."

"Oh, that." He waved his hand contemptuously and nearly sent my china flying. "It is not the hanging by the teeth—she does not mind that. It is not that I am fifty feet up in the air—she does not care about that either. What she does not like are the lions."

"The lions?" I said stupidly.

"Yes, the lions. I hang by the teeth over a cage of lions while the lion tamer is doing his act. Doreen says that is humiliating myself. They lower the wire until I am just out of reach of the lions and they jump up and try to claw me while the tamer has his back turned. Doreen says that I am demeaning myself to act as lion-bait and no decent woman would ever speak to me again once she has seen it."

He crossed his arms on the table, buried his head in them, and began to cry. "I love her," he sobbed, "and she doesn't respect me."

He stopped crying, and drank his tea, and was just passing his cup for the fourth time, when it happened.

I THOUGHT he still held the cup and saucer, he thought I'd hold of it, and it fell between us. My best china! Yet, before cup, saucer, and spoon had reached the floor, Gustave had scooped them up in one hand and was juggling them in the air.

"I used to be a juggler as well as an acrobat," he said calmly as he put them down.

But it had been enough to give me my flash of inspiration—I saw the way out of his difficulties. "Could you juggle while you were hanging by your teeth?" I asked.

"But of course."

"And wouldn't you need someone on the ground to throw you the things you need to juggle with and pick up the things you drop?"

"Naturally."

"Do you think Doreen would do it?"

"Doreen?"

It always takes a few minutes for people to appreciate my most brilliant ideas. This was one of them. Doreen couldn't stand there among the lions, so there would be no more lions. Gustave would be a star performer at last, he wouldn't have to share his glory with a lion tamer and a few mangy, flea-ridden big cats. It was all very sensible.

So sensible that I was at the wedding a month later, and after the honeymoon they came to my ground-floor front as I always hoped.

I went to see his act the first time he tried out his juggling in public while hanging by his teeth. Doreen threw the coloured sticks, the cups and saucers, and the rings up to him. She has nice legs in those fishnet tights. What a pity she won't be able to go on doing it for long—someone will have to stay at home and look after the baby. THE END

As we had tea together I tried to discover what it was about Gustave's act that could be so terrible. I had visions of him hanging by his teeth among a lot of girls with nothing on

Shock treatment for your home

by JACK FOSTER

To make modern living safer, Ronald Adams endures jumping toast, "live" blankets and mousetraps that may kill a man

Richard Harvey, the electricity test manager, and Miss Elsie Hobbs, the cook, check new-made scones to see how an electric oven bakes them

Adams and Miss Janet Osborn put an electric blanket on a test machine. When Adams pointed out that a "make-it-yourself" blanket kit was dangerous, the manufacturer withdrew it

ON a cold, foggy evening in January, 1953, homegoing Londoners stopped and stared when a man flung open the doors and windows of a ground-floor office facing on to Victoria Embankment.

As fog seeped into the room and its temperature dropped rapidly, the man muffled himself in overcoat and scarf. He took a bundle of towels and babies' napkins from a washing machine, put them one by one through a mangle and hung them on a line stretched across the office. Finally he arranged them inside an electric drying cabinet and sat down beside it in the cold, damp room.

By the time the clothes were dry the audience had gone. A policeman had explained to them that the office was a testing laboratory.

"They must have gone on wondering just why I was washing clothes," says Ronald Adams, a senior test engineer with the Electrical Development Association.

Adams had been asked to test the drying cabinet in extreme conditions of temperature and humidity. His only way to lower the room temperature from sixty-five to forty-five degrees Fahrenheit and create a damp atmosphere was to throw open the doors and windows.

"I caught a heavy cold," he recalls. "So, no doubt, did the people who stood in the fog outside. But they had their entertainment—and my test worked."

Since joining the association in 1949, Adams has checked hundreds of domestic electrical appliances for safety and performance. Washing clothes is the sort of chore that has become routine.

Now working in a modern, well-equipped testing house at Leatherhead, Surrey, Adams and his dozen colleagues guard the safety of millions. Electricity causes more than a hundred deaths in Great Britain each year and nearly half occur in the home. The testing house constantly spurs manufacturers to make their appliances safer.

Of the three hundred appliances, ranging from refrigerators to mousetraps, tested at Leatherhead in one year, more than a hundred had a major fault and were corrected. Only about ninety were entirely satisfactory.

"We cannot compel a manufacturer to alter his goods, but most manufacturers now submit their goods before putting them on the market and adapt them if we advise it," says Adams.

Recently he saw a newspaper advertisement offering a kit for readers to make their own electric blankets. He got the manufacturer to submit a sample and found that it contained a length of heating element and a diagram with "vague" instructions. The buyer had to take two pieces of blanket and sew the element in the positions shown in the diagram.

"The element was unsuitable, and in any case it is dangerous for people to make their own electric blankets," says Adams. The manufacturer agreed to take the kit off the market.

RETURNING home from work one winter evening, Adams found that a two-year-old electric iron had fused unexpectedly as his wife was using it and the ironing was only half completed. He made temporary repairs and his wife finished the ironing. The iron had become faulty far sooner than expected, and at the testing house next day Adams traced the defect. He informed the manufacturer, who ordered that make of iron to be adapted as he suggested.

"By acting promptly, the manufacturer probably saved hundreds of housewives a lot of trouble," says Adams.

He is responsible for testing portable equipment and often takes appliances home to observe them in actual use. Once he had to test an electric mousetrap. It consisted of two pieces of live metal—the cheese went in between. Adams set it up in a shed at home and waited a week for results. There were mice in the shed, but the trap did not electrocute one.

"It was more dangerous to people than to mice," Adams recalls. "People who did not know the metal was live and touched it could have been killed."

One night recently he took two toasters home. At breakfast next morning the first burned the toast to a cinder. He watched the second hopefully. Suddenly the toast leaped six feet across the table and landed on his plate. The spring of the toaster was too fierce. "The manufacturer altered it: we could not hope for it to be so accurate again."

Adams has tested electric hoes and hedge clippers in his own garden. At the testing house

he once turned barber and cut the hair of another member of the staff.

"That was to test the electrical load of the hair clippers under normal operating conditions, and as a test it was satisfactory. The haircut took half an hour and was ragged, but I've been forgiven."

Members of the laboratory staff also act as guinea-pigs for tasting butter and milk in refrigerators on trial. When the wrong type of rubber or paint has been used in the refrigerators the food can acquire an undesirable taste. "Sometimes butter becomes uneatable after an hour," Adams says.

A qualified woman cook from Leatherhead visits the testing house once or twice weekly. She makes scones to test the performance of the oven at high temperature, a fruit cake so that it can be watched at low temperature, cakes to see if the oven cooks uniformly and a complete dinner to establish whether it can cook a full load.

Many domestic appliances which are perfectly safe when new become dangerous as they deteriorate. The E.D.A. tests take this into account. The connector of an electric iron may lose its insulating properties through constant heat, and one rigorous test is to simulate in a short time the heat to which an iron is subjected during its normal life.

Another machine mechanically drops the iron an inch and a half on to a steel plate hundreds of times, imitating the constant banging it receives when an impatient housewife puts it down on the end of her ironing board. Adams had one iron break down within fifteen minutes of switching on: the rubber insulation melted and the fuses were blown.

In another experiment an electric kettle is filled, boiled and emptied a thousand times to measure the life of the heating element. Recently a kettle tested by Adams failed after only fifty operations: it was kept off the market.

Much of Adams's work is concerned with testing electric blankets. Once his staff was carrying out tests on fifteen makes of blanket simultaneously. The blankets are folded and refolded a thousand times in four directions; for hours they are left switched on between heavy felt to establish whether they will withstand fairly high temperatures.

After the endurance test had proved one blanket to be faulty, Adams heard that a fatal accident had occurred with that make of blanket in use. "In most cases, however," he says, "the fault has been misuse by the person concerned—leaving the blankets switched on and then rumpling or folding them—rather than a fault in the blanket."

A dark, quietly resourceful Londoner of thirty-five, Adams was on the electrical staff of the Royal Air Force Establishment at Farnborough for eighteen months and then specialized in work on domestic appliances with a leading manufacturer.

He joined the Electrical Development Association in 1949, a year after the testing laboratory had been opened. The postwar demand for electrical appliances had brought firms into the trade whose products were sometimes unsafe, and the E.D.A. and the British Standards Institution decided that a laboratory was needed to test appliances which manufacturers, area electricity boards or members of the public suspected to be unsafe.

The laboratory was first at Savoy Hill, London, and moved to Leatherhead in October, 1953. Richard Harvey, the manager, was largely responsible for the design of the new building.

He incorporated a method of using electricity for space heating by means of grids of electric cables laid in the floors and automatically controlled by thermostats.

Since 1948, Harvey's staff has tested more than two thousand domestic electric appliances. Faulty goods are being eliminated steadily and complaints from members of the public are falling.

One of the very few complaints in the past year was from a Midlands woman who sent in an electric blanket saying that whenever she touched her husband in bed she got an electric shock. Was there something wrong with the blanket? she asked. Adams found that there was. He told the manufacturer and the blanket was modified.

More often when electrical goods fail, the user is to blame. A London woman took an electric fire back to her dealer soon after buying it and complained that it had blown the fuse. The dealer could find no fault with the fire and suggested that the woman had used it wrongly. "But I only put it in the bath to heat the water," she said.

"It is fantastic," says Adams, "that she was not killed." THE END

WHY?

JOHN was due to inherit £20,000 under his father's will on "the day he attains the age of twenty-five years." His twenty-fifth birthday was on July 22, but on July 21 he was killed in a car accident.

His executors sued for his inheritance and their claim was contested by his father's executors. "At the time of John's death he was still twenty-four, and therefore was not yet entitled to the money," said counsel for the father's executors.

But they lost the case.

WHY? *A barrister explains the judge's ruling on page 23*

The secret invaders

Continued from page 9

when they saw the trawler. It was about half a mile away and heading seawards across their stern. In that moment, too, the trawler saw them.

There was nothing more they could do. It ploughed towards them. They could hardly put up a fight. "Better get rid of the canoe, anyway," Lyne said. He pulled out his knife and ripped at the air bladders. The canoe was sinking as the trawler drew alongside and its lines came flying over to them. They had just enough strength to grip the lines and be half-hauled aboard. They lay on the trawler's heaving deck, heads shaking, unable to get to their feet, paralysed from the waist down.

The seamen carried them below and put them between dry blankets. The trawler got to Algiers that evening. French naval police took Lyne and Thomas ashore and straight before a slim French officer. He was captain of the Dunkerque, which had suffered a mauling from the British.

He eyed them sourly. "*Quel bateau?*"

The stocky interpreter at his side rapped: "What ship?"

With a show of reluctance they yielded their cover story, bit by bit. They had been bearers of a letter for a de Gaullist agent east of Castiglioni, they said. As soon as their capture became certain, the message had been eaten.

At the end of the interrogation, the interpreter murmured a parting message for them. "It is the captain's conclusion that, as spies, you may be executed by shooting."

"We were wearing British service dress and badges of rank."

"It makes little difference what you were wearing when this was covered by your lifejackets."

The captain gestured and they were marched off. His hostility was plain.

Naval police escorted them to Algiers naval prison and locked them in separate cells. At intervals their guards hauled them out for interrogation before a succession of staff officers. The guards' vigilance was not all that good, and Thomas fooled them by singing a message for Lyne.

From his cell came a hoarse baritone intoning "Roll Out The Barrel." But the words were alarming. "You said you swallowed the message," Thomas sang. "I said I swallowed it, too. Da-da, dee tum-tum, we've got the blues on the run. . . ."

That was a point—the only point—on which their stories had been confused. When next they emerged for questioning, Lyne tried to cover up this blunder. He acted foxy, hinting that their real method of destroying messages was secret.

One night Lyne asked why their guards had been given arms. The commandant sipped his wine. "It is the habit, when a big convoy is passing," he said airily.

In fact, it was the invasion convoy. . . .

The date was November 7. The Coppists were ready for the vital job of guiding the assault boats to the right beaches. Off both Oran and Algiers the weather had worsened till it had reached the extreme for canoes.

At Oran all went well with the landings, the markers assisting. The only flaws were a cockeyed timetable and the arrest of a couple of Willmott's men when they stood nonplussed on a beach, surrounded by Americans shouting: "Heigh-ho, Silver!" Nobody had equipped the canoeists with the answer to these passwords.

It was around Algiers that confusion reigned. As the convoy approached, Willmott was summoned from his submarine for a final conference aboard the headquarters ship, U.S.S. Samuel Chase. The threat of a coming shambles hung plainly in the conference room. The American Senior Naval Officer Landings was proposing not to release craft from their mother ships until fifteen minutes before they were due to land. Fifteen minutes to travel eight miles!

Moreover, landing officers had been wrongly briefed and someone had included an additional beach in the landing plans. Now the invasion would be hours late.

While they argued and thrashed these things out, the whole convoy kept drifting past its landing sectors. By the time the assault was finally launched it had drifted four miles out of its position, and most landing craft officers had no idea where they were.

Dawn broke to reveal utter chaos. No fewer than forty assorted craft were scattered along the beaches. The waves spilled and played catspaw with them. Ammunition for troops at Blue Beach had been landed on Red Beach. There, tanks had churned the sand into an impassable mess for the wheeled trucks following them in.

Even now, in broad daylight, flotillas of landing craft were pouring in to the wrong beaches. At Blue Beach, hundreds of trucks were disgorged on to a shore with no way out. The trucks jammed and milled helplessly.

One beachmaster forged grimly ahead, disdaining to pick up Amer, the navigator assigned to him. He had elected to guide in the craft himself—and landed them eight miles out of position.

Amer accordingly hailed and rescued another assault wave which was veering hopelessly off course in a strong current. He got them to their beach, or nearly. No amount of reconnoitring by submarine periscope could have discovered its hidden treachery—sandbars. The boats grounded on them. Heavily kitted, the troops leaped off and floundered in water up to their necks. A couple of well-sited machine guns would have wiped them out, but mercifully the shores were deserted. Inland, there was only sporadic small-arms fire here and there.

From a villa on a clifftop, Willmott had a clear view of the coastline, which was a mass of wrecks. Many units were still scattered or lost, and the support troops had yet to come in when the seas abated.

What a lot had still to be learned about landing armies! Everything had been saved by a providence almost as momentous as Dunkirk's. Any semblance of defence from the cliffs and dunes would have meant a massacre.

It would not be like this, Willmott knew, when the time came for the Allies to invade Europe.

Two days later Algiers fell—or rather, gave itself up. . . .

The invasion chastened those who had planned it. This was clear to Willmott when he landed back in England by air. Wherever he went in Whitehall he had only to open his mouth about beach reconnaissance to find senior naval officers paying him sober attention. At Combined Operations Headquarters Willmott was hustled into a full-dress conference.

There were all the combined ops chiefs of staff, flanked by related tiers of Admiralty and War Office high-ups. They heard him out in a total silence. Some took notes. For two hours after that he answered a stream of questions.

At the end he walked outside in a daze. All along he had known in his heart that one day they would come upon the truth that enemy-manned beaches must first be explored by scouts. But he wondered if they had suddenly gone crazy. With the enthusiasm of converts they were talking about forming fifty teams. *Fifty!* really, it was absurd.

Right away, he organized a hunt for

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R. W. Emerson

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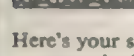

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a hideout in England where he could train his men. One of his new officers, a slim, wiry fellow named Geoff Galwey, found the ideal place—a yacht club on Hayling Island.

For Willmott, the rapid enlargement of his own outfit was a heady, exciting business. One navigator he put in charge of a Copp party was Lyne who, with Thomas, had been freed from prison in Algiers.

The yacht club hummed with plans, and the noticeboard was always thick with fresh orders. This was exhilarating, but one order loomed threateningly. Although it was mid-winter, a major item in the training curriculum was swimming nude. "Hardening," Willmott called it.

New arrivals shivered and speculated that the C.O. probably wouldn't make them go in if it were *really* cold. Older hands who heard that turned away, smiling at each other.

The first thing which startled newcomers to the lectures was the blackboard. On it was written in large chalk: "People would rather die than think. Many of them do."

Willmott tried to snatch some leave. He was careworn from paper battles and working round the clock. He managed to take a week on a farm in Hampshire, but his deputy, Leslie "Gaffer" Moorhouse, found him with a shrill buzz of the phone.

Combined Operations were asking for him. They wanted two Copp teams to leave for the Mediterranean at the beginning of January, in a little over a month. The end of the North African campaign was in sight. The next big landing would be in Sardinia, perhaps, or Sicily, or Italy.

Willmott put Norman Teacher—a magnificent type, intelligent, daring and full of fun—in charge of the two teams, which were called C.O.P.P.3 and C.O.P.P.4.

All too soon, Willmott was seeing them off to the Mediterranean. There had been no time to fit them out with remotely suitable equipment. And they had been through only a tenth of the minimum training essential to survive swimming an enemy-held beach. Willmott had a feeling, when he saw them off, that he would probably see few of them again.

Then the blow fell. The operation was launched. The first Willmott heard about it was when he walked into his office at Combined Operations. Moorhouse sat white of face at a desk. He gripped a slip of paper and said: "Afraid I've got bad news for you."

Willmott took the paper. It was a signal from the commander of the 10th Submarine Flotilla at Malta.

In mauve teleprinter-type it announced that Teacher, Noel Cooper and a third member of C.O.P.P.3, Wheelock Burbridge, were missing.

Willmott could not leave Britain at that moment. He had six teams at Hayling Island to see through their training.

"Gaffer," he said quietly. "You'd better go out there. Find out what happened. . . ."

Soon after Teacher had arrived in Malta, two lorries drew up at the villas where he had set up a training base. Naval officers and men clambered out and unloaded gear.

Their leader, a slim, fair lieutenant, looked inquiringly for Teacher. "My name's Bob Smith. I've just flown in with my two teams from Cairo. I have orders to join you." He saluted and shook hands.

Teacher stared. The meeting was a complete surprise. The teams had trained in canoes, and were a result of Willmott's activities in Egypt a year or so earlier, when he had pioneered beach reconnaissance. They had limited and primitive gear and their training had been scrappy.

Time was short. In a few days Teacher received a summons to Valletta from the commander of the 10th Submarine Flotilla. "We need all your teams for the next dark period," he said. "It's for Sicily. The force commander wants reports on three sectors."

McHARG, leading C.O.P.P.4, was to tackle the beaches along the north-west corner of Sicily, from Trapani to Cape Zaffarano, beyond Palermo. Teacher and C.O.P.P.3 were to explore the south coast, from the mouth of the River Belice eastward to Sciacca. From there to the southern tip of Sicily, Smith and his Middle East teams would operate, one team exploring the Gulf of Gela, the other reconnoitring the island's southerly cape.

Four submarines—Unbending, Safari, Unrivalled and United—were to take the teams to their sectors. The first two submarines left Malta at dusk on February 27—and ran into hazards right from the start.

Off the Sicilian coast, the Unbending, with Teacher and his team aboard, had to crash-dive when an enemy trawler and then a bomber started prowling round her. Two hours later, near midnight, she took a cautious peep by periscope. All seemed quiet. She surfaced and made slowly for the canoe-release position, two miles off the mouth of the Belice river.

Teacher and his paddler, Cooper, jumped into their canoe and pushed off, the hum of the submarine fading behind them as she withdrew to sea.

It was a battle against the weather from the start. About two hundred yards from the shore Teacher tapped Cooper on the shoulder. "I'll go in here," he whispered. "Nightie-nightie."

He lay across the canoe, and let himself drop into the water. In a few seconds he had gone. Cooper stayed there fighting the waves and staring inshore. About half an hour afterwards he thought he caught a glimpse of Teacher in the surf. But it was probably a rock, or a shadow, or his imagination.

Three hours later, the Unbending came purring in through a lively sea. Cooper was alone. They had to haul him aboard. He was spent and wordless. After a while they got him down into the wardroom. He was heaving for breath and shuddering. He swallowed some brandy mournfully.

"I never saw the old man again," he said. "Not from the moment he left the canoe. I went in as close as I could, but it wasn't any good."

On the second night, after they had conned the coast all day for a sign of their leader, Burbridge, a hefty red-haired Canadian, went in to look for him. It was a forlorn try. He returned empty-handed.

He and the others of C.O.P.P.3 went on with the job of surveying their sector. Bad weather knocked them about, but they managed to take soundings. The coast was alive with sentries, spaced every seventy yards.

On March 4, Burbridge took Cooper to scout a beach near the port of Sciacca. By now the strain of it all was beginning to tell on Coppists and submariners alike. They were tired and yellow-looking. For five days they had had little sleep.

Burbridge and Cooper vanished into

The Ruined Windmill

by DOUGLAS GIBSON

Anchored in rippling seas of wheat
It drowses in the sun,
Like an old ship in quiet retreat
With ocean days all done.

No more to the wide winds its sails
Shall beat, nor golden grain
Rejoice its heart; now only gales
Trouble its dead domain.

Yet birds have found a haven there
And young wings are unfurled
To launch upon the tide of air
Where once the bright sails whirled.

"Oh, there's my doorbell, Ethel, I'm afraid I'll have to hang up"

the wind-whipped night, and were never seen again. C.O.P.P.3 had now lost all its officers. So the Unbending turned back for Malta.

North-west of Teacher's sector, there was a sigh in the night and another submarine surfaced. It was the Safari, with C.O.P.P.4, led by McHarg, aboard. With his paddler, McHarg was beaten back by mountainous seas.

Then Edward Parsons and his paddler, went out from the Safari and got captured. And as the nights wore on, the disasters mounted.

Lieutenants Victor de Kock and Alfred Crossley, of the Middle East team aboard the Unrivalled, went inshore and disappeared. Their remaining officer, Lieutenant George Davies, tried to find them and was captured, together with his paddler. Captured too were Archie Hart and Eric Folder, of the other Middle East team aboard the United. And there might well have been two more casualties if Bob Smith and David Brand had not paddled their way back to Malta.

Willmott paid a visit to Combined Operations Headquarters. Afterwards, all the way down to Hayling Island, he kept turning over in his mind the things he might have pounded into the heads of those in command.

How could he convince them what a murderous waste of guts and brains it was to send raw volunteers into action? What was more, a drowned man and an upturned canoe, with all that enemy intelligence could read into the discovery of them, could change the whole course of the war.

"Well, how long do you need to train a Copp man?" Captain Roger Selby, a senior staff officer at the headquarters, had asked him.

Willmott thought and answered: "If he's already a navigator—two to three months. If he's not, anything up to five months. Good navigating is more than half the battle."

Selby eyed Willmott and said steadily: "Admiral Cunningham wants two Copp teams out in the Mediterranean for the next dark period. What am I to tell him?"

Willmott read the incredible signal and shrugged. "Even if their gear is ready, they'll never be able to train in that time, sir." It was the nearest he could get to a flat refusal.

"Perhaps we ought to try somebody else?" Selby suggested, watching to see what the taunt might produce.

"Look, sir, my two new Copp teams are putting in up to twenty hours a day training. If I made them train any harder I'd end up with two teams of wrecks. Their new canoes haven't even arrived yet. And as for their other gear. . . ." He dropped his hands helplessly.

"Twenty hours a day? You really think all that's necessary?" Selby was taken aback. He frowned and muttered, fidgeted with the signal and, after a long and gloomy silence, cleared his throat. "Here's what I'll do. . . . I'll report it's not possible to have two teams ready for the next dark period. That will give you a fortnight or so's breather. However——" his gaze measured Willmott—"I must say I don't relish sending signals like this. We all know what it's like, being denied what we need to fight the war, don't we. . . ?"

By the time Willmott reached the yacht club it had grown completely dark. It was a rough night.

There were sounds of merriment coming from the wardroom. As Willmott entered he saw that nearly all his officers were there. Out of the crowd Geoff Galwey came forward with a grin. "Hallo, sir. Have a drink?"

Willmott hesitated. "All right," he said. "Thanks."

When his drink came, he sipped at it nervously, looking around him, and asked suddenly: "Have the new canoes arrived yet?"

"Yes, sir," said Nick Hastings. "They came in this morning."

Willmott drained his glass and put it down. "Well, that's something. Might as well get out in them and see what they're like."

Galwey and Hastings stared at him. "What? *Now*, sir?"

"Yes, *now*. Better start rounding the teams up right away." He consulted his watch. "Let's say in twenty minutes?"

OUTSIDE the wind was howling. The ratings muttered some fearful words as they took the canoes down to the water's edge. Galwey stepped in behind Willmott.

They paddled out into deep water. The farther out they went the worse the sea became until, clear of the arms of land on either side of them, they met the full blast of wind and waves.

A wave hit them green. Galwey shouted: "Shouldn't we turn it up, sir?"

"Why?"

"It's near gale force. The chaps can't take this sort of sea."

Right, Willmott thought. Now. He raised his voice and bellowed: "Let go anchors!" He splashed his own anchor overboard and heard rebellious groans from the other canoeists float to him downwind. He blinked salt out of his eyes and thought with cold satisfaction of the unpopularity all this was buying him, and how he was going to get his money's worth.

This was the absolute weather limit for any sort of canoe. They would come out of it knowing a lot more about their boats. It was better to suffer the experience here rather than off an enemy coast.

NEXT WEEK: The Copps spy out a Normandy stronghold

WHY?

See page 20

BECAUSE, said the judge, in law a person attains a specified age on the day before his birthday—except when Parliament has expressly ruled to the contrary. So John was twenty-five when he met his death.

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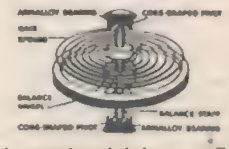

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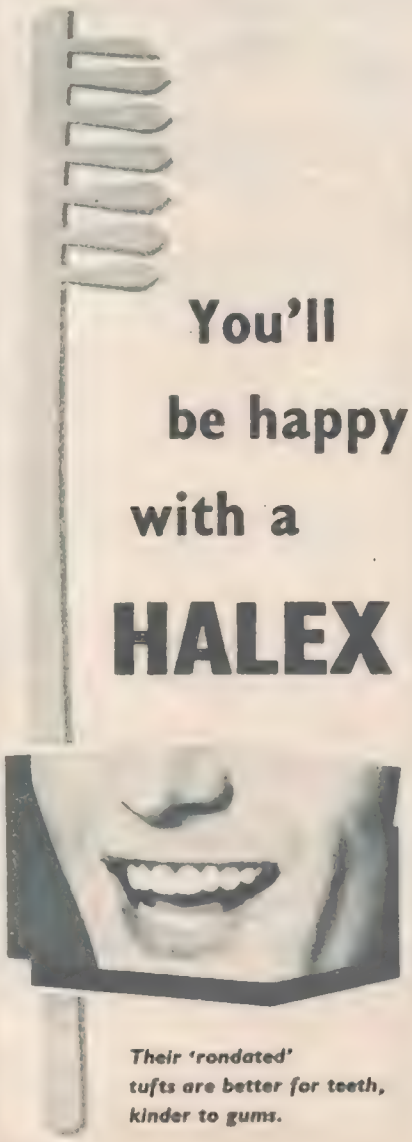

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The Queen's favourite portrait painter

Continued from page 15

dyed brunette. I sent her away to get it bleached."

Halliday's speciality is the "conversation piece," a study of the subject against his home background. His most famous picture in this genre is that of the Queen with the Duke of Edinburgh and their two children in the drawing-room of Clarence House.

He has painted conversation pieces in many stately homes, including Chatsworth, Knebworth and Hardwick. For one early picture, of the Lady Elizabeth Cavendish, Halliday had to change his identity. The portrait was intended as a birthday surprise for the subject's father, the late Duke of Devonshire. When the Duke, mildly curious at seeing Halliday about the place, inquired who he was, the butler calmly replied, "The gas man, your Grace." The gas man remained a few days longer.

So far this year Halliday has completed three portraits of the Queen, for Winchester, Liverpool, and Salisbury, Rhodesia. For despite the pressure of other work, he never tires of painting a face that remains a constant challenge.

"The Queen's face is a very subtle one to interpret," he says. "Her special beauty is so much more than the sum of her features. My favourite picture is an early sketch of her as Princess Elizabeth. It shows the face of a young girl, glowing, dedicated, and with the first glimmering of that regality which was to come.

"The Queen is not tall. Most people have to look down into her eyes, and it's a mistake—one I've made myself—to paint looking *up* at her. Of course, you depict her queenliness, but it's at the expense of the vitality and charm revealed in the upward curve of her eyebrows and mobile mouth."

Despite the fourteen portraits and the dozens of "plots and plans" Halliday still doubts if he has captured all her real qualities. THE END

LEAVES FROM Starke's HOLIDAY GUIDE BOOK

"The people are impulsive and excitable. It is best to avoid engaging in controversies of a political nature with strangers"

September moon

Continued from page 13

stood up. She said urgently: "He's your dog and you're the one who's got to let the vet have him. Please say yes, Stan."

She wanted him to make the sacrificial decision, because then it might not seem to him that the world was always taking away. But she knew it was an impossible thing to ask him, and she could hardly believe it when he looked up at her and swallowed and said, "Yes."

She called the vet, and he came quickly, and took away the dog.

Stan began crying, noisily and not quite as ordinary people cried. She put her arm round his shoulders and she didn't care what the vet thought. She hugged him and tried to stop his crying. Then she heard the vet's car going away.

She thought, not for the first time in her life, how unfair God had been to some people. She thought with painful humility what a lot of things she had: wits, health, fun; and this Stan had had damn-all until a mongrel came along and unaccountably wagged its tail at him. . . .

TOMMY had emerged from the bank manager's office at half-past twelve feeling as if he had escaped miraculously from a fiery furnace: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego rolled into one. He boldly cashed a cheque at the counter, which he was now able to do because the limit of his overdraft had been increased by £300; and this, as always, gave him the sense of being richer by £300.

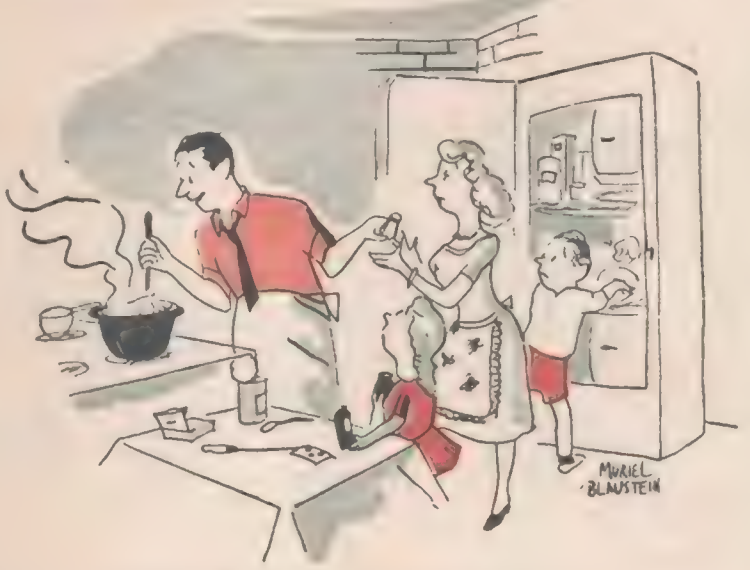
It hadn't been an easy interview and the bank manager had said: "You know, we're not money-lenders, Mr. Tomkins"—which Tommy thought was a taradiddle if ever there was one. But in the end Tommy had promised to sell the fifteen cattle next week at Ledbury Market, and on that condition he was permitted the extra overdraft. He had also got the documents for George; but he was persuaded, at any rate after he'd had three stiff drinks at the Feathers, that, if only he could avoid a bad financial crisis until the hops were in, George might relent about the mortgage.

The extra overdraft would keep the wolves at bay for a week or two; then he'd sell the cattle, and perhaps scrape through until the end of hop-picking. In the Feathers they were saying the cattle trade was very good; they were also talking about botrytis, which had broken out on two or more of the hop-farms. That was ominous, but after another drink or two Tommy realized that the price of hops might go up if there were a shortage. An ill wind . . . so long as the Hope Farm escaped botrytis; and Tommy, in his present mood, feeling marvellously reprieved by fortune, simply would not entertain the possibility of such a catastrophe. So he went to the Talbot, and, because it was market day, the bar was open all the afternoon.

At half-past three he tore himself away and the car seemed to go much better, as it always did when Tommy had had a lot to drink. Tommy had his foot right down all the way, because it suddenly seemed tremendously important to get back to the hop-picking, to urge on the pickers, to institute overtime, to gather in the hops before the botrytis came any closer: the hops which might be worth a packet this year, if half the crop was going to be ruined.

So he came at last, in a cheerful daze, into the farmyard at the Hope. Tim's sports car was parked by the gate, and this vaguely puzzled him. He went through the gate and saw Tim and Marianne and George and four figures that looked like visitors from Mars. They wore black shiny suits and sou'westers and rubber boots. In their gauntletted hands they carried the kind of guns which spacemen had in the comic strips. The whole scene began to feel very drunk indeed.

George came up to him first, George smelling oddly of disinfectant, and he was saying: "For heaven's sake pull



"Onions! Fork! Salt! Pepper! Bay leaves!"

yourself together. A terrible thing has happened. . . ."

One of the spacemen spoke to him: "I'm real sorry about this, sir," and Tommy, more confused than ever, recognized the spaceman as Police Sergeant Croft.

Then Marianne was at his side, a ray of sanity amid the confusion, and she had him by the arm and was leading him away. He heard her say: "One of the cattle down in the meadow. . . . Everything's fixed and the police are going to burn it. . . ." Then he heard the word "anthrax." "But you mustn't worry, the vet says the others aren't likely to get it. Uncle George is in an awful flap, of course. I say, are you all right, Father?"

He tugged himself away from her and leaned on the gate, and for a few seconds the whole farmyard cake-walked about him. He saw the blurred Martian figures with their short, blunt flame-guns swaying and swirling. Then suddenly the scene was bright and clear again, and he felt the sweat icy-cold on his forehead. Marianne was close at hand but it was Tim who took him into the house and who saved him from falling when he stumbled over the hall table.

Tommy held on to the table and in a brief moment of clarity he looked at himself with loathing and contempt. He saw ruin lying all about him. George—and who could blame him?—was surely going to sell him up. Marianne would leave him; and serve him right. He couldn't send that bunch of cattle to market, so he'd be in trouble with the bank. And he remembered the broken fence yesterday.

"My God," he said to Tim, "what if your cattle get it?"

"We'll worry about that when it happens," Tim said.

The brief clarity faded. "I'm as tight as a tick," Tommy said and stumbled again. This brought him opposite the John Martin picture which hung on the hall wall. John Martin was a Victorian painter, rather out of fashion now, but Tommy loved this picture which was called "Adam Sees Eve For The First Time." John Martin used every colour he could lay his hands on, and matched the streaky pink sunrise clouds of the background with rosy flamingoes in the foreground. But somehow he had contrived to imbue and inspire the whole painting with a glow and a glory, a light that never was on sea or land, surely the light of paradisial morning. The sun was rising upon a brand-new world, new flowers and flamingoes, new trees, new beasts, new wonder and new love.

Tommy stood staring at it, smitten by an awful awareness of sin.

"Tim," he said. "Look at that bloody picture."

"Yes."

"Have you," said Tommy with deliberation, holding on to his senses as if they were a runaway four-in-hand tearing at the reins, "have you ever seen the world looking like that?"

Tim smiled and was silent for quite a long time. He said at last: "Well, yes, I have."

"Often?"

"Quite often."

"Do you," persisted Tommy, wagging a finger at Tim, "still wake up on bright mornings to such a vish—vish—vision?"

"Yes."

"Then for heaven's sake," cried Tommy, "hang on to it; for when it goes you're damned."

Speech left him and he began to sway; Tim caught him as he subsided and carried him upstairs. . . .

On Sunday afternoon John Sollars went down into the hopyards, and walked through them in the stillness which he loved. There was no picking on Sunday, never had been and never would be as far as he was concerned.

The pain went with him, keen between his ribs, as he hobbled across the lower hopyard towards its south-west corner. He walked slowly along the last row, and every few paces he pulled down one of the bines and examined it carefully. He was searching for any sign of botrytis, and he was searching on the windward side because he believed, perhaps unreasonably, that the pest was wind-borne.

He could smell, or he thought he could, a faint whiff still of the sour-sweet smell which had been in his nose yesterday; the burning hide and flesh and fat of the beast which had died of that filthy disease down in Tommy's meadow. Anthrax! His father had had a cowman who had died of anthrax when he, John, was a boy. They had said his blood went black, and thick as tar, and ever since he had regarded anthrax with particular horror, thinking of it not as an ordinary disease but as something obscene.

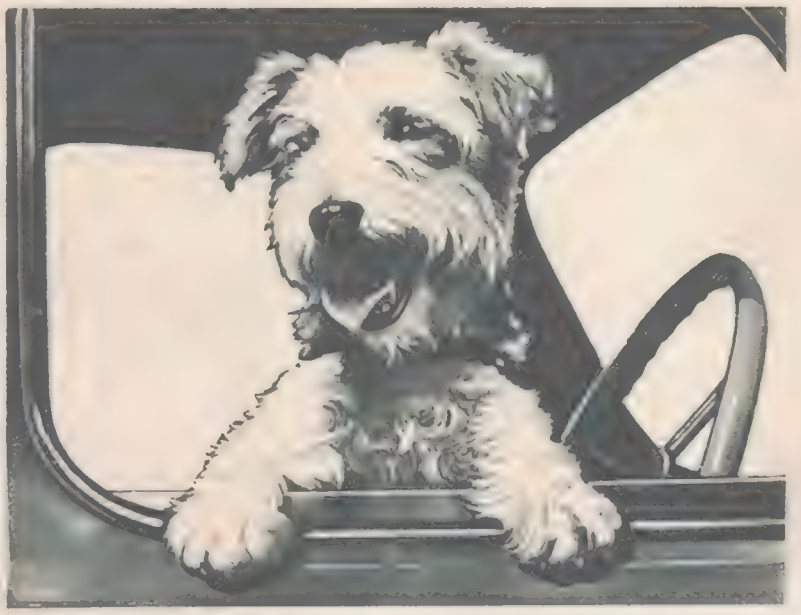
He'd had the vet up, yesterday, to inoculate Sollarshill Sally and the other Herefords; he thought they'd be safe enough. But the fact that Tommy's unclean beasts had run with his, down by the river, still deeply troubled him.

Glaring across at Tommy's farm, he saw it as a kind of reservoir of pestilence; his hand shook in the crook of his thumbstick as he contemplated it. And yet he wanted that farm. He would plough it and fallow it field by

TRUST—2

Never trust a man who speaks well of everybody.

Churton Collins



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field; grub up the rotten old pasture, put down new leys, until at last the land was clean and sweet again.

Maybe he'd get it yet. He'd heard that the little fool's brother was staying there, looking into things, worried about his security. If the farm came into the market in consequence, John would have it.

Meanwhile, he thought grimly, as he went back from the hopyard on slow feet up the unwelcome hill towards the farmhouse, meanwhile young Tim was hanging around that daughter of Tommy's. Well, that was his affair; but what had infuriated and also considerably puzzled John Sollars was that Tim should have asked her to Sunday afternoon tea.

Sunday afternoon tea at Sollarshill was ceremonious: the wedding present tea-service, not a piece broken yet after twenty-five years; Molly's special walnut cake; crumpets and brandy-snaps. There was a tradition about Sunday afternoon tea. The people you asked to it were your good neighbours, your fellow hop-growers and Hereford breeders. You would also ask for inspection and approval, after long deliberation and most careful assessment of her qualifications, the girl you intended to marry. But, by heaven, you didn't ask your flibbertigibbet!

Tonight, after dinner, John intended to give Tim a piece of his mind. . . .

Marianne opened the white drive-gate, which swung easily upon its hinges, so unlike the gates at the Hope. The drive was long, straight and intimidating. As she walked up it her apprehension grew. There was a garden gate at the end of the drive, new-painted bright green and as well oiled as the other. She went through it up to the front door, and rang the bell.

A trim little maid showed her into the dining-room. A walnut cake in the middle of the table, uncut, caught Marianne's eye. Bread and butter first, then hot scones, then the cake: that would be the order. Of course they had Sunday tea in the dining-room and all sat round the table.

They were all present today—Mr. and Mrs. Sollars, Tim and his young sister, Carol. Tim came across to her and led her towards the empty seat between him and Mrs. Sollars.

John Sollars got to his feet. He did so, not easily, and in a way resentfully, but with a kind of desperate courtesy; and he put out his hand. As she took it, she had a quick intimation of his illness and his pain; and then of all the things he could have called her he called her "miss." It didn't sound as if it was meant to be rude, the way he said it. It seemed to come quite naturally, but it had a cold unfriendliness. He looked at her through pale blue eyes angry with pain. "Afternoon, miss. Sit down," he said.

Mrs. Sollars, with her cool smile, said: "It's a long time since you were last here, er—Marianne."

"Yes."

"Of course you've been away a lot," Mrs. Sollars said, and she gave her a quick, brief, bird-like glance. Then she became very busy replenishing tea-cups. Now and then she glanced at Marianne, but always briefly, always with a ready excuse for that split-second appraisal: "Milk in your tea?" She looked away and then swiftly back again: "And sugar?"

For the first time in her life Marianne felt socially afraid. It had never occurred to her that she could be. She had always been sure of herself; but, sitting beside Mrs. Sollars, subject to those swift glances which somehow made her think of pecks, feeling John Sollars's eyes upon her as he sat slumped at the head of the table, she was frightened, unhappy and unsure.

When Tim rang her up yesterday to ask her to tea, though she had said, "Yes," eagerly, glad that he had asked her, she had already begun to be afraid. It was too soon, she had thought. They should have allowed their love to go along, step by step, for a little longer in its wonderful inevitable way. They were neither of them ready, yet, for the interrogation in other people's eyes.

Tim, who happened to glance at her

"If you think you've changed your attitude, you may come out now"

then, said: "Penny for your thoughts."

"That one was worth much more than a penny," she said.

She knew Tim was trying hard to defend her against his mother's pecking glances. He began talking to her in the easy way he always talked, shielding her, shutting her off from all the others. He spoke so quietly that she had to lean a little towards him, and thus he drew her close, and away from his mother.

A minute later she heard Mrs. Sollars saying, with a suggestion of sharpness in her cool remote voice: "Tim, please pass the scones down the table."

The tea-party dragged on. Marianne nibbled a scone, which she didn't want, and then the walnut cake was cut, as if this were a small ceremony. It seemed hours before Mrs. Sollars got up and said: "Let's go into the sitting-room and give Polly a chance to clear away."

It was better in the sitting-room. Carol came straight across to Marianne and sat on the arm of her chair. She

TRUST—3

It is happier to be sometimes cheated than not to trust.

Samuel Johnson

said: "I'm awfully glad you came. I love your dress."

It was grey and white candy stripes. Marianne said: "I only finished it this afternoon. At half-past two I was standing on the kitchen table, getting Father to measure the hem."

"What, you made it yourself?"

"Yes."

"Oh dear," said Carol. "I try, but I think the patterns don't suit my bulges or something. I zipped myself into the last one and couldn't get out."

"It's quite easy really. Next time, if you like, I'll come over and help you cut out."

"Will you? I say, I couldn't make an evening dress, could I? I want it for the hop-dance. It'll be about the twenty-seventh of this month I expect. You'll come, won't you?"

"If you ask me."

"Well, I wanted to buy a *special* dress, but now I don't think I'll have enough money."

"Well, let's make one then," Marianne laughed.

"But quick?"

"Quick as you like."

"Then tomorrow morning we will borrow Tim's car and go to Hereford and you'll help me choose the stuff?"

"Will Tim lend you his car?"

"Not he: but he'll lend it to *you*," said Carol.

Then Tim joined them.

"Coming?" he asked Marianne. "I've got to do the milking. It's five thirty, and the cows can't wait."

Then, as she was saying her thank-yous to Mrs. Sollars, he put his hand on her arm. It was firm and proprietary; and she saw Mrs. Sollars's glance dart like a robin's from her face to her arms where Tim held it, to Tim's face, back to hers—in disapproval, reproof, bewilderment? You couldn't tell: Mrs. Sollars's eyes were inexpressive as a bird's.

They went across to John Sollars's chair. "Please don't get up . . ." she began, but he was on his feet already.

He looked her up and down as if he studied the point of a Hereford; and all the time Tim's hand still on her arm proclaimed *This is my girl, like it or not*, as plainly as any gesture could.

John Sollars turned his angry eyes towards Tim, and for a second or two they faced each other. Then John turned back to her. "Good night, miss," he said.

Tim went into the Home Ground, while Marianne held open the gate. The four Jerseys, like little deer, trod daintily past her. Tim walked after them, as each went into her own stall and waited there. As he hung up his coat on the cowhouse door he said: "We haven't got a milking machine because it wouldn't be worth it for so few. But I shan't take long, if you don't mind waiting."

"It would be quicker if we did two each," said Marianne.

"What? You can't milk, can you?"

"Where do you suppose I was brought up?" she said. "Naturally I can milk. Unless, of course, your father would be afraid of my touching your precious cows." She was still smarting from that "Good night, miss," of John Sollars's.

Tim was putting on his dairy coat. He turned round sharply. She stood with her feet wide apart and her hands on her hips. "Get on with it then," he said cheerfully. "There's a stool and a bucket in the stall and a coat hanging up behind the door."

She hesitated for a moment; then she went into the cowhouse. A few moments later he heard the milk drumming on the bottom of the bucket: a rat-tat-tat, angry-sounding, then a steady stream.

He called out to her: "Bet you I'll do three while you do one."

Marianne didn't answer. She tucked her head into the flank of the cow and milked as hard as she could. The cow, not used to her, turned towards her its small head, so like a gazelle's, in curiosity or dismay. It lifted its hind leg two or three times, as if it were going to kick. She heard the splash and patter into Tim's bucket, and she thought: Damn you, if only I can get started on my second one before you've finished both of yours.

Soon her wrists began to ache. It was years since she had milked a cow. She heard Tim picking up his bucket and moving into the next stall. Her wrists seemed on fire now, her fingers hurt sharply, and the teats felt hard and unyielding in her hands. You didn't forget how to milk, any more than you forgot how to ride a bicycle; it would have been easy enough if she'd taken her time over it. But she was possessed by an angry determination to keep up with Tim.

The cow was nearly dry now; the milk came in short bursts, then suddenly it stopped altogether. She picked up her stool and nearly upset the bucket in her hurry to get into the second stall. The new cow's skin twitched over its withers as it became aware of a stranger.

She patted it and sat down, her legs apart, the bucket between them; her head was against the cow's side, in her nostrils was the earthy cow-smell and the warm sweetness of the milk, and all at once the habit came back into her hands. She forgot the ache in them, even forgot her fear of the Sollarses.

She worked steadily on, and the milk made a pleasant rhythm in the bucket. She didn't look up when Tim came and stood in the stall beside her.

"Lost my bet," he said. "Well done, Marianne."

"What do I win?"

"A pint at the pub? We'll have to take the milk across to the dairy first."

They carried the churn between them. They put it down in the appointed place, and Tim put his arm round her shoulder.

"Not here!" Marianne said. "No, Tim, not here!"

Tim didn't understand. He bent to kiss her, and she pulled herself free.

"I love you," she said. "Oh, so much that I know now I've never loved anybody in my life before; but for God's sake take me away from here, Tim, *quick*."

Tim's car was parked against the shed which had Ye Olde Farme Shoppe over its door. Marianne almost ran across to it and jumped in. Tim got in beside her. "Right, hang on," he said. "Here we go."

At the Royal Victoria they went into the hop-pickers' bar, and Mrs. Agnew, standing behind the counter and obviously disapproving, glanced from Tim to Marianne. She said: "It's ever so quiet and cosy in the saloon; and as you know, Master Tim, it's apt to get rough here on a Sunday night, with all those monkeys playing up daft like."

Marianne shook her head at Tim. "I'm not in a quiet and cosy mood."

Indeed she wasn't; the drive had put her in a wild and crazy mood. She had almost forgotten the oppressiveness of Sollarshill. She wanted, tonight, the crowd and the shoving and the swearing and the laughter, singing Welsh girls, smoke and stuffiness, the fierce, hot life of the gipsies surging all round her.

"Now buy me something expensive," she said. "I'll teach you to bet me I can't milk a cow."

Mrs. Agnew said primly: "It's as you like, but I'd have lit a fire for you in the saloon. Here they come, the monkeys." She pointed out of the window.

Marianne cried: "Oh, Tim, look. Isn't that the most beautiful pony you've ever seen?"

A small boy of Wisdom Lee's was trotting the dun pony up and down. Wisdom and all his tribe stood round, admiring it. Marianne stood on tiptoe to get a better view.

"It's perfect!"

"Wisdom thinks so," said Tim, "and he's been horse-dealing all his life. But why do *you* think so?"

"I was saying to myself the other day that I'd like to have a pony again. But now I've seen that one, I wouldn't want any other." Marianne watched it through the window as it arched its

neck and tugged at the halter, dancing a few steps in play or impatience.

"Well, that's one you *won't* have," laughed Tim. "See what Wisdom says when I try to buy it."

Wisdom appeared at the entrance to the bar. He hesitated there for a moment, and glanced covertly round the room. Marta and Mami, as they followed him, made the same anxious appraisal, as if they sized up the company and counted their friends and their foes. A full dozen of Wisdom's tribe came after them; and Tim, looking over his shoulder as he bought Marianne her drink, was aware of the murmurous tension and was puzzled by it. He heard Mami say: "Tchk! He is not here."

Wisdom shrugged his shoulders and said: "He will come, I think. We shall see."

"Wisdom," Tim called, "what'll you take for your dun out there?"

Wisdom stared at him, surprised, almost resentful.

"But you *know*, Master Tim. . . . Even to you I wouldn't sell her."

"I was pulling your leg. You love her, don't you?"

"'Tis like this," said Wisdom. "In a man's life there are a lot of horses; maybe a lot of dogs, or whatever else he fancies. But when he looks back on his life he can see that there was only one; one horse, one dog——"

"One woman?" laughed Tim.

"'Tis so," said Wisdom gravely. "Maybe there were many, but it's only the one he'll remember when he's dying."

Marta joined them and old Mari. Tim ordered drinks and Marta took them across to the other gipsies. Mami said she'd have a drop of rum to warm her. "That'll make you chatter," said Tim, and she turned her bright mischievous eyes towards Marianne.

"Any of your impudence, Master Tim, and I'll tell your young lady what I know about you. She's too good for you, I think."

She seemed to take to Marianne and soon, possessively clutching to her bosom her second glass of rum, was tracing with a grimy forefinger the life-line on the girl's outstretched palm.

Wisdom, all this time, spoke little, drank little. The room was rapidly filling, and every time the door opened he glanced towards it. Tim couldn't make out what was going on, but he was aware of the tension.

The Welsh girls streamed in, with an assortment of their boy friends. Someone produced a concertina and very soon they started singing.

"How are you doing?" Tim asked Marianne above the uproar.

"Mad as a March hare tonight," she said. "I was half tight with happiness before I started." She tucked her arm in his.

"You're feeling all right, though?"

"A bit airy; as if I might fly up to the ceiling if you let go of me. So hold me tight, my love, my love," she whispered to him. "I'll try not to disgrace you. But it makes you feel tight even to listen to that concertina."

The Welsh girls had lapsed into humming, softly and sweetly in chorus, making a delightful lullaby sound. The gipsies, who didn't sing, began to shuffle their feet; and Tim said: "Watch them: in a minute they'll be dancing."

The shuffling became a recognizable stamp, in time with the music. It grew louder, and the floor shook, and even the glasses rattled on the shelf behind Mrs. Agnew, who shouted in vain: "You monkeys! You'll bring the ceiling down!" But she couldn't make herself heard above the din of the stamping boots.

A tall youth, one of Manasseh's, ran into the middle of the room and started tap-dancing. Then, on Tim's right, Marta started; and old Mami, prancing up to Marianne, lifted her skirt and kicked her legs. She had very small feet and trim ankles, almost like a girl's.

Marianne's feet refused to keep still any longer. She whispered to Tim: "It's something I can do. May I?" And, letting go of Tim's arm, she cried: "Come on, then, Mami!" But Mami, out of breath, shook her head and sat down to watch Marianne. "Marta! Wisdom!" she called. "Watch the young lady! She dances better than that *chal* of Manasseh's!"

All at once—Marianne didn't know how it happened—there was a clear space all round her. The gipsies had formed a circle, Manasseh's *chal* joined her within it; side by side, while the gipsies roared approval, they tap-danced like mad.

Tim, on the fringe of the circle, found Marta and Wisdom beside him. Marta gathered him to her, planted a wet kiss on his cheek and whispered: "That's your gel—and you'll never kiss another save her and Marta?" Then old Mami, wriggling through the crowd, reached Tim's side and scolded crossly: "You're in the way, I can't see. I want to watch them."

Tim seized her by the waist and raised her up above the heads of the crowd. "There, you old witch," he said. "Riding on your broomstick."

She was as light as a child. Stench from the pipe which she still held in her toothless jaw filled Tim's nostrils, with other smells, of ancient dirt, herbs, rancid ointments. She gripped him by the hair to balance herself and from her point of vantage yammered encouragement to the dancers.

They went faster. The young *chal* took off his cap and flung it into the crowd. Marianne, mad as a March hare, flushed and laughing, tossed her head back to keep her hair out of her eyes; the gipsy's black locks flopped up and down, making a weird crest for him. Their feet went quicker still.

The clear Welsh voices were like a mountain stream now rippling, now pouring in a torrent. The gipsies were yelling, Wisdom and Marta were stamping. There was so much noise that Tim didn't hear the door open for the third time. He was only aware that the stamping had abruptly ceased, and then of Mami hissing as she struggled in his arms: "*Wisdom, they have come.*"

He put Mami down, the gipsies fell suddenly silent, the concertina uttered a last, long, excruciating wail. For a fraction of a second there was still the tapping of the dancers' feet; then the gipsy stopped dancing, and Marianne followed suit. They stood in the middle of the circle, looking at each other in bewilderment. The circle parted and all the gipsies shuffled back towards the wall. Right up the middle of the room, between the two rows of gipsies, strode Black Herbie.

Black Alf followed him; then came Betsy, Black Liz, ten or twelve of their people.

Wisdom at Tim's side said very quietly: "I think you'd better get your young lady away."

"What's the trouble?" Tim said.

"There's none yet, but there's someone looking for it." Black Herbie, with his people keeping close together in a bunch, had gone up to the counter. The other gipsies watched them in silence. The room that had been so noisy was extraordinarily still.

Tim said: "Okay. Thank you, Wisdom. Good luck."

He wasted no time. He caught Marianne's eye where she stood with the *chal*, and she was with him in a flash. Together they slipped quietly out, the Welsh contingent following them.

Marianne leaned against Tim.

"All right?" he said.

"The world's whizzing round a bit, but it's a very nice world."

They stood outside the bar and listened. Far away, down the road, was the sound of the retreating Welsh singing. But within the bar, all was silence. Not a sound; and then, sudden and brief and angry, a little murmur, a buzz, as if a hive became agitated, nothing more. The buzz died down; and there was silence again, as Tim and Marianne tucked themselves into the car. . . .

Inside the hop-pickers' bar, Wisdom's voice cracked like a whip: "Herbie, get out."

Black Herbie stood quite still and laughed. "Put me out."

"I will not fight in here," said Wisdom.

Then Black Herbie hit him, not hard, across the mouth.

There was a moment's absolute silence after the blow. Then from all directions came a sudden uproar, shrieks and shouts and curses, and Black Herbie half-ran, half-pranced towards the door, looking over his shoulder and laughing at Wisdom who came more slowly after him. All the gipsies ran towards the door, barging into each other, knocking over the tables, breaking the glasses.

The room emptied. In the yard, where there was an electric lamp on a tall pole lighting the parking-place, the gipsies formed a kind of circle around which they seethed in confusion.

Beneath the electric lamp the fighters cast grotesque and murderous shadows. Wisdom's tribe formed half the circle: Herbie's folk the other half. In the forefront of those who shouted for Herbie was Black Alf; indeed, he had broken the circle and intruded a little way into the space which had been left for the fighters. As the fight surged to and fro, so Black Alf ran this way and that. Always he seemed to be in a position not far behind Wisdom. Marta's eyes never left him.

Wisdom, breathing hard, reeled back before a rain of blows. The retreat took him almost into the crowd. There he stood, defensive, his left leg well forward, his body beautifully balanced, swaying a little from side to side. Black Herbie, thinking victory near, was unwary of Wisdom's poised readiness; he came on, flailing with his arms, and Wisdom, choosing his moment, let fly with his left and right almost together.

There was only the fraction of a second between the two blows; and they did not merely thud, as the previous ones had done, but sounded like two sharp cracks of bone on bone. Black Herbie staggered, and there was a great shout from Wisdom's people. Some of them surged forward, thinking the fight was nearly over, and these impetuous ones for a moment obscured Marta's view. She could not see Black Alf, though she knew he was somewhere in the crowd behind Wisdom. Then she saw the shadows, and screamed.

Wisdom's shadow was of a tiger in mid-spring; he was leaping in to finish Herbie. Herbie's shadow, long and spidery, sagged backwards from the knees. There appeared suddenly a third shadow with arms upraised.

The arm struck even as Marta screamed. Wisdom for a moment stood absolutely still. Then he swayed, first backwards, then forwards, and as he fell Black Herbie stepped aside and hit him with all his strength on the side of the jaw.

WISDOM lay upon his face. As Marta ran to him, Black Herbie turned to his people and pointed to the crumpled heap on the ground and cried: "The King of the Gipsies!"

Marta kneeled by Wisdom. She put her hand upon his head, and it was wet. She turned her hand palm upwards to the light and saw the blood. Kneeling there, with the crowd all round her, Herbie's people and Wisdom's pushing and peering, she looked in vain for Black Alf. He was not among them. He was gone, with his shadow.

Marta, with the gentleness of her great strength, took Wisdom by the shoulders and turned him over and propped his head in her lap. He moaned, and Mami said: "I have sent the boys for a gate."

"A gate?"

"They will lift it off its hinges. We shall need it to carry him."

When Marta looked round her now, she saw that all Black Herbie's people were gone. They had gone silently, knowing perhaps the evil they had done; but a long way down the road Black Herbie was shouting, his voice the only voice upraised.

"Herbie's the kiddie, Herbie's the boy!"

Mami said: "They are coming with the gate."

Wisdom's eyes were open now. As Marta put her face down to his he spoke at last.

"My head, my head. . . ."

Some way down the road Tim had brought the car to a halt. He said: "Has the world stopped going round?"

"Except when I shut my eyes."

"I'd better get you home, I think." He started the car again and drove on again. They came to Tommy's crooked signpost. Tim swung the car round it. At the front door they got out. Very gently he opened the door.

"Light?"

"Just inside, left."

He felt for it and found it.

"All right now?"

"Gently passing out I think. Happy though."

"Goodnight." He kissed her and watched her tiptoe up the stairs before letting himself out. Standing in the hall he looked past the hatstand where Tommy's panama with the cricket-ribbon round it hung, and found himself gazing at the picture on the wall of which Tommy had asked him: "Have you ever seen the world looking like that?" He hadn't noticed the title then. He now saw that it was called "Adam Sees Eve For The First Time."

He switched off the hall light and went out into the night, through the garden, into the yard. The air was full of the smells of the night, roses in the garden, late meadowsweet, old hay, wet earth, dewy grass, and to Tim in his joy they smelled as fresh as if he had never smelled them before. The moon, riding high above the oast, was bright enough to cast dark shadows. It had been only a wafer that night he met Marianne in the lane; it was growing up with their love.

To be concluded next week

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The frontier

Continued from page 6

that his 'treasure' was in this lorry." She laughed bitterly. "Have you got a gun?"

"No," I said.

My eyes were flickering from the mirror to the lit circle of the speedometer. We had reached the twelfth mile post since we'd started. We had three miles to go now before we saw the gauchos, and the soldiers were three or four minutes behind us. It would cost us over a minute to stop and take in the luggage.

We reached Mile Fourteen. I stared into the darkness ahead. The gauchos should be waiting by the road, already in the headlights, but there was nothing.

Mile Fifteen . . . and Sixteen . . . still nothing.

"They are not there," I said.

The girl leaned forward. "They must be there," she said. "They must."

"We are at Mile Eighteen now," I said. "They didn't come." I was watching the needle of the temperature gauge. It was rising fast. And we were beginning to climb, only slowly now, but in twenty miles we'd be on the mountain road, where hairpin after hairpin bend zig-zagged up the wall of mountains to the frontier and the pass. We wouldn't make one leg of it if we started with the engine boiling.

"I knew they wouldn't come," Juanita said heavily. "They have turned against us too, the only two servants my uncle still trusted."

A CURVED blade of moon was rising and I could see the mountains now, a black wall in front of us. The pursuing lights were perhaps a mile and a half behind. If nothing happened before then, they would catch us on the first or second hairpin.

And then something came to me, like a sudden picture in my mind: the second hairpin. I'd been up to the frontier once before, and I was remembering a raw scar of earth on the outside curve of that second hairpin bend, where some Indians were dragging a huge tree trunk down the mountain side. Instead of the ordinary narrow bend, the sweep of the tree trunk had made a wide table of raw earth; big enough even for a lorry to manoeuvre on.

If I could lead them on to that, very fast, very close to me; if I could swing at the last split second, on the last foot of firm ground; swing right round and back on to the real road, then we might have a chance. They wouldn't be expecting it, and they'd go over the edge.

I eased my foot a fraction on the accelerator.

"What's the matter?" Juanita said. "Why are you slowing?" I heard the fear in her voice and saw it in her eyes. First the gauchos, she was thinking—and now?

"It's all right," I said, and tried to explain to her what I meant to do. "Will you trust me?"

"Yes," she said, "I'll trust you. It's strange how we both trusted you, my uncle and I. I remember him saying last night: 'That fair-headed mechanic at the silos; he will help.' "

"I'm an engineer, not a mechanic," I said patiently. "If your uncle had understood the difference; if he had even understood what a mechanic was, none of this need have happened. He wasn't living in the twentieth century."

All the time I was talking I was watching the mirror. They were a mile behind . . . half a mile . . . two hundred yards. I could see the lorry now, and that meant they could see us.

We were nearing the first of the zig-zags.

"Get down on the floor of the cab," I said. "They may start shooting." There was a bee's hum somewhere in the cab and a little star grew in the windshield. Cold air blasted through it. "You see?" I put my arm round Juanita and forced her down. I knocked the mirror to one side so that their lights wouldn't blind me, and swung the wheel for the first hairpin.

"You are next, sir—practically"

They were close behind; into the turn almost as soon as we were. I heard them shout as I changed gear.

Now for it. . . . There was the table of earth, a flat shadow of ground perhaps twenty yards across. I switched off the lights and the darkness was like a wall slamming towards us, the lights behind masked by the body of our truck. I counted the seconds and the yards under my breath.

I felt a lurch as the lorry left the road. There was a shudder of springs under us, and then the crash of the lorry behind us taking the bump. I heard two shots, but the lurching must have thrown them wild.

Then it was time. I swung the wheel over hard. I felt the near wheels lifting and the lorry poise for one frightening second on its centre of gravity. Then we were round, the wheels slamming down again, chewing at the raw red earth under them.

Behind me I heard a man scream, and long, long afterwards, the dull thunder of the other lorry falling.

I let ours roll for twenty yards, and stopped. Juanita stayed where she was for a long time, kneeling on the floor, her face hidden against my leg.

"Is it over?" she whispered at last. I touched her hair with my hand. "Yes. It's over."

"Can we go on again?"

"In a little while. I have to let the engine cool first. And . . . I need to go down there to make sure . . . to see if there's anything that can be done for those men." I fumbled in the tool-box under the seat for the torch. "I won't be long."

She didn't answer but, as I got out, she opened the door on her own side of the cab and stumbled down. "I'll come with you," she said.

The lorry was a long way down. One of the soldiers had fallen clear of the cab. The other was still behind the wheel. They were the same two small soldiers who had carried the petrol for us and overheard Don Carlos's last remark about his "treasure," without understanding it. It had cost them very dear.

We covered their faces with their ragged coats and climbed up to the road again without saying anything. The moon had filled the sky with silver now, and the stars glittered like frost above the blackness of the mountains.

We were five yards from our lorry when I saw shadows moving.

"Good evening," a voice said. A torch beam flashed in my eyes, blinding me, and on either side of the road I heard the click of rifle bolts. I felt Juanita's hand on my arm, her fingers digging into the flesh.

"Who are you?" I said.

"The frontier guard, señor. We heard shots. The señor has had an accident?" The speaker lowered his torch beam, and let it sweep with apparent carelessness round the circle of soldiers who were covering us. "An accident, señor?" he repeated.

I could see him now. He was taller than his men, with a thin, long nose and a thick gloss of waved hair showing to one side of his cap.

"Not an accident," said Juanita, before I could stop her. "There are two men down there. They were chasing us." She pointed down the mountain side, shuddering.

"Go down and see," the officer said, without looking round. One of the soldiers padded away into darkness.

"Are we close to the frontier?" asked Juanita. She was shivering.

"Barely a mile on foot, señorita. Four miles by the road. May I see your papers, señor?"

I slid the envelope out of my hip pocket. "Our ordinary passports are with the *chef de police*," I said. "We were obliged to leave in a hurry, because of the rioting."

"The revolution," the officer corrected. "Have you not heard? But of course not. It was on the radio only half an hour ago. We have been victorious in all provinces. . . ."

"Victorious?" said Juanita. "Thank God, thank God! What do we need with passports now? I am Juanita de Santa Ana, niece to Don Carlos. . . . Is he safe?"

"I said *we* had been successful, señorita." The officer's voice changed, suddenly harsh. "The army is now on the side of the people in their revolt. . . . Your papers, señor."

I gave them to him and he shuffled them under the beam of his torch, rifling the wad of purple thousand-peso notes that Don Carlos had pinned to the passport signed by himself as Commandant General of the Provincial militia. He must have guessed that his signature alone might soon be useless.

"I regret that these papers are not in order," the lieutenant said, hesitating. I wondered how many years' salary he was holding in his hands.

"Is my uncle . . . still alive?" Juanita whispered.

"I regret, señorita . . . according to the radio reports. . . ."

"Then the senorita can be of no interest to you." I said. "It will be an act of chivalry to let us go on now, I beg of you. . . ."

In that instant I heard the soldier pattering back from his errand. He panted into the circle, crackling his story out in a dialect that I couldn't follow.

But I didn't need to follow it. The officer slid our papers into his tunic pocket. "You are under arrest," he said. "For murder. The señorita will get into the cab, and you, señor, in the back, with the soldiers. I will drive."

Ten minutes later we were at the frontier post. It was hardly more than a stone hut by the road with a frail red and white pole resting on trestles and, beyond it, the road narrowing, curving up between the mountains to the real frontier, the jagged seven-thousand-foot pass a mile beyond the post.

Inside the hut a fire smouldered damply. There were two benches, a table, of rough planks, an oil lamp and a pile of straw and striped red blankets along one wall where the soldiers slept.

"The señorita can have my room," the officer said suavely. He opened a door and gestured inside to where a narrow, tumbled bed filled a room not much bigger than a cupboard. A jumble of scent bottles crowded the narrow window sill.

"Your boots, if you please, señorita."

"My boots?" Juanita said in astonishment.

"Yes, señorita. You would not get very far in bare feet, I think." He smiled wolfishly. "Your shoes, too, señor—and the lorry will be seen to as well, I assure you, so do not waste your time in thinking of escape."

I bent down to unlace them.

"Thank you," the officer said. "Will the señorita be pleased to eat something? I regret that we have only coffee and tortillas."

"I will have nothing, thank you," Juanita said dully. "I shall try to sleep a little, if you permit me."

"Take something," I said. "It will give you strength."

She looked at me and smiled, sadly. "I am sorry," she said. "I have brought you very far from your machines." She closed the door.

"And you?" the officer said. "You will eat something? Forgive me if I do not join you. I have already eaten. The soldiers will guard you turn and turn about, so I beg of you to make no trouble. If you are called by nature . . ." he was already half asleep, lying back on one of the benches with the bundle of boots and shoes under his head ". . . one of the men will go outside with you."

He grunted once, settled himself down, and soon began snoring softly. A soldier turned down the lamp and pushed a mug of black coffee and a slab of greasily cold tortilla towards me across the table top. Behind me the other soldiers went to their beds.

I sipped the coffee and tried to force myself to eat some tortilla. What time was it? Midnight? I looked at my watch, and saw unbelievingly that it was barely eight o'clock.

The little soldier opposite eyed the watch covetously. . . .

For a tortuous hour I sat restlessly thinking, the germ of an idea forming. At last I screwed up enough courage to put the idea to the test.

I looked at the soldier and then nodded towards the door behind which Juanita was sleeping.

"Can I say goodnight to the señorita? You can leave the door open and watch us all the time." I saw the suspicion leap to his face, took off my watch and pushed it to him across the table. "Yours," I said, "if you give me ten seconds with her."

His hand hesitated, and then closed over the watch. "Be quick," he said.

I went softly to the door. "Who is there?" Juanita whispered.

The moon had almost set, but the last glow of it touched the mass of bottles on the window-sill. Through the window I could see a square of forest trees climbing the mountain side. Once out there. . . .

"We've one chance," I whispered to Juanita. "A very small one. I will try to get round to the outside of this window. Will you be ready to come through to me and try to cross the frontier on foot—and barefoot?"

"I'll come," she said.

I squeezed her hands. "Take those

TRUST—4

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George Macdonald

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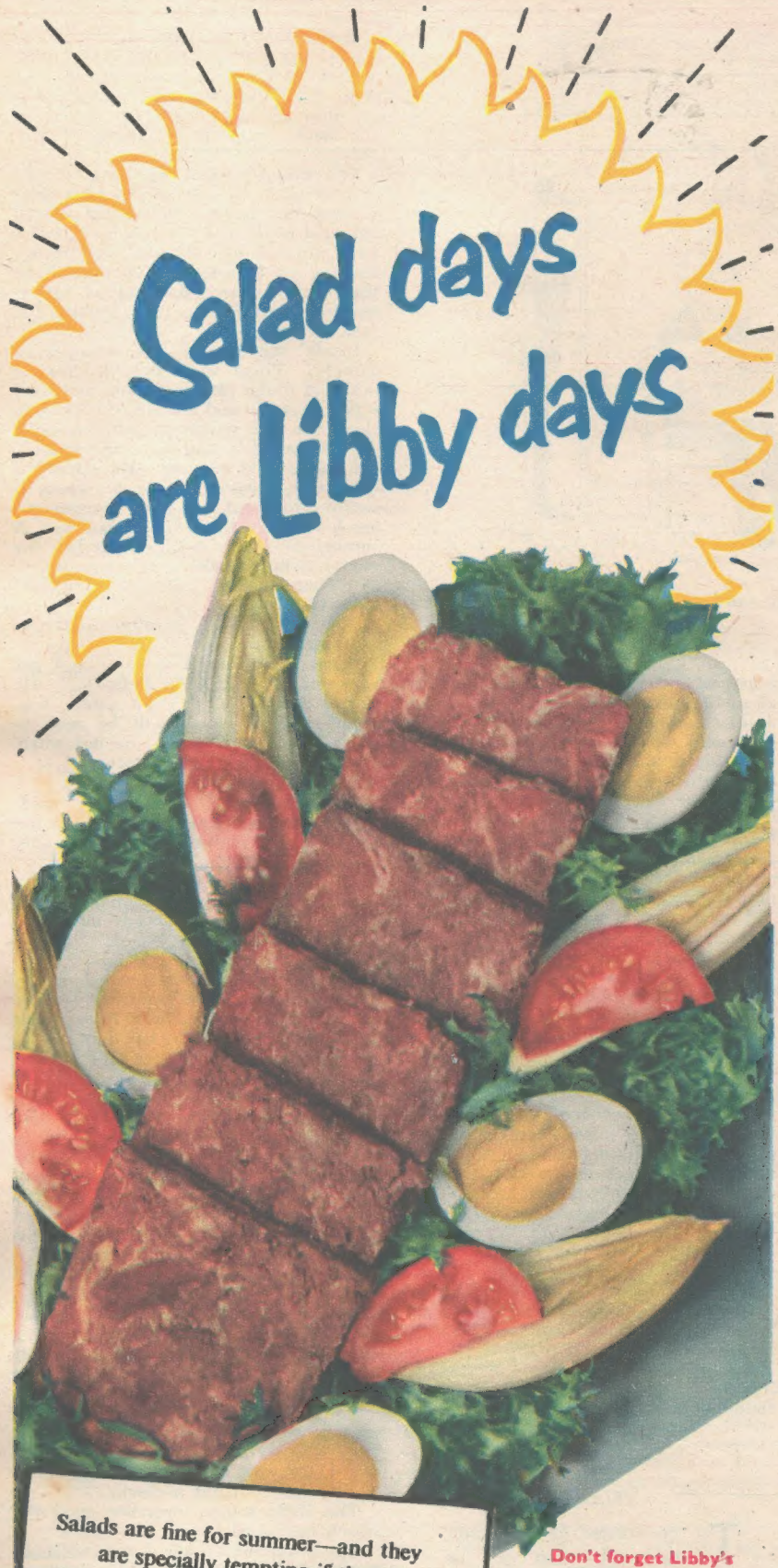

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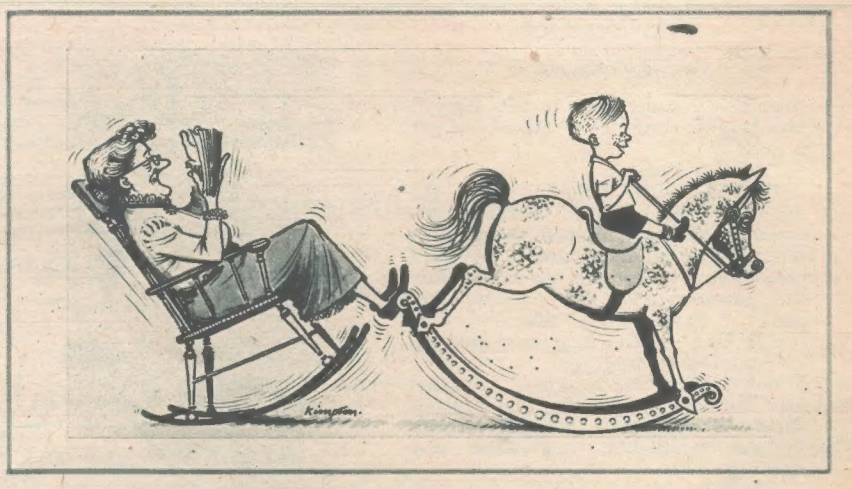

bottles off the sill as soon as the door closes."

Then the soldier was behind me, his hand rough on my shoulder. "No more," he said. He pushed me out of the room and drew the door to softly. "You sleep now."

"I want to go outside first," I said.

He scowled and thrust the muzzle of his rifle into the small of my back. "You run, I shoot," he said.

I opened the outside door and took one step . . . two . . . three. . . .

"Enough!" I felt the rifle muzzle brush my back again.

I swung on my heel, sweeping my left hand round and up under the rifle barrel and bringing my right fist across driving all the weight of my turning body on the hook. It took him under the ear and he sagged at the knees, the rifle falling from his hands. I caught it awkwardly and got my knee under his falling body, letting the weapon and the man down together in a heap. Then I went round to Juanita's window.

She was on the sill, a blanket on the ground at her feet. "We'll need this," she whispered. She dropped to the ground into my arms, and for a second I held her against my heart. Then I had the blanket across my shoulder and we were running, the ground like broken ice under our feet.

WE must have covered half a mile before we heard the first shouts, and then half a dozen shots close together.

Three minutes later I heard the roar of the lorry.

"They're coming," Juanita said. "I can't bear any more. I can't go on."

"They can't find us in the lorry," I said. "And they can't track us on foot without light. We've only to keep going."

"They'll be at the pass."

"We'll go along the mountain side. Only keep going."

Headlights cut into the darkness, touching the treetops above our heads as the lorry climbed. They dipped towards us for a sickening moment and then swung away again to the right as the road zigzagged.

"My feet," Juanita whispered. "I can't go on."

"Only a little more," I whispered. "Only half a mile. I'll make bandages for your feet."

She sank on to a fallen tree-trunk. I kneeled down and ripped the blanket into strips. Her foot was like bloodied ice in my hands and I tried to chafe it into warmth. I could hear her choking the pain back between shut lips.

"You are very good to me," she said, when I'd bandaged her feet as well as I could. She bent closer to me, until I could have kissed her. I got up quickly. "We must go," I said. "Only a little while more."

She stood up, shuddering with pain. We started off again and climbed steadily, dragging ourselves up by tree roots and jutting boulders.

"Only a little while more," I said again, but I didn't believe it any longer. And something else was forcing itself into my mind. All the time we were climbing, I could feel the contours of the mountain side forcing us to the right, closer to the road. I didn't admit it even to myself at first, but half-way up there was no begging it any longer. The pass was narrowing.

Half an hour later I saw that it was worse than I'd thought. For a hundred yards the ground had been levelling, with a cliff face sheer as glass on our left hand, and the road nearer and nearer to our right. And then, suddenly, we were in the pass itself. It was perhaps fifty yards across, no more. And on the road, swung across it at right angles, was the lorry, its headlights cutting a swathe of light across the whole breadth of the pass.

Inside the cab I could see the glow of the lieutenant's cigarette, like a tiny red eye watching us. In the back the soldiers would be crouching, rifles at the ready.

I shifted my weight as I tried to think, and felt something turn under my foot. A thought flashed into my mind. I bent down and fumblingly picked up two heavy stones.

"I've got it," I whispered urgently. "It's mad, but it's our last chance. Keep close to me, and for heaven's sake don't fall."

We went forward on our bare feet like shadows . . . closer . . . closer, until I could smell the tobacco of the lieutenant's cigarette.

I put my lips against Juanita's ear. "When the lights go out," I breathed, "don't wait for me. Don't wait for anything. Just run."

I crept on my knees until I was beside one front wheel of the lorry and could feel the warmth of the radiator against my cheek. I got up from my knees into a crouch, slammed the first stone through the near headlight, then jumped for the far one, swinging the second stone through it.

Darkness fell like a steel shutter, and I heard Juanita pass me in a stumbling run, her breath sobbing in her throat. I was after her before the glass had finished falling.

The lorry door slammed and a revolver spat behind us. A rifle went off and there was shouting, falling away behind us. The road dropped, and we tore down it, the flat dirt of it like velvet after the rocks. A bullet whined a long way overhead.

"We're through," I yelled. "Through, do you know that, my darling? That was the frontier."

The shouting behind us died away. After a while we heard the noise of the lorry's engine starting, until it too faded away on its own side of the frontier and the night was quiet. But still we went on running, until we couldn't run any more, and had to stop.

We walked more soberly after that, hobbling on our frozen bloodied feet. But the pain was nothing. We limped side by side until the second frontier post loomed up and a sleepy sergeant in shirt sleeves began questioning us with a mixture of sympathy and yawning irritation.

"Santa Ana," he said, writing Juanita's name laboriously in an enormous book. "Political refugee. No papers."

"That doesn't matter," I said. "She can share mine as soon as I get some new ones from my consulate."

"Marriage?" said the sergeant sourly. "Bah! That is worse than what you have just escaped."

I looked at Juanita, and she smiled at me. "I think it will perhaps be worth the risk," she said. THE END

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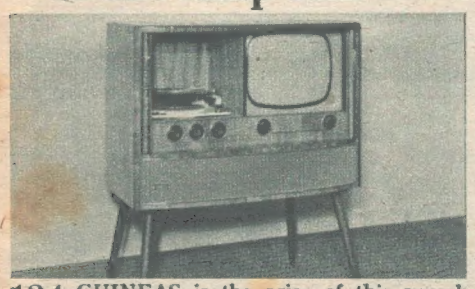

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Here's how to shape a Bullet. First, grasp the broad idea by enjoying the latest winners. Then choose as your starting-point any Example from list below. To it, add TWO, THREE or FOUR words to make the whole into a bright Bullet.

Inflation, The Wolf	Worried Sick
Our Strength	To Help Her
Restless Sphere	We Work And Work, But
After All The Talk	At The Church Door
Wise Parents	Up Popped A Policeman And
Can't Agree	Weaker And Weaker
Pride Of The Regiment	Bit Of A Sensation
To Pay The Rent	Sonny's Goal
His Income	Skill
Moving	In The Autumn Of Life

Last six Examples are incomplete: if you wish to use one, first complete it with a word of your choice—then make your Bullet as above.

On The Brink Of..... Hell Of A.....
Shadow Over..... Should ..... More
The .....Secret The.....Are Coming, So

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1,610 other awards have also been posted. (Tournament winner will be announced in earliest possible issue.)

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2. Editor undertakes that all Bullets received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. at the rate of 6d. per Bullet. Fee submitted will be taken to cover Bullets in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. Make P.O. payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.

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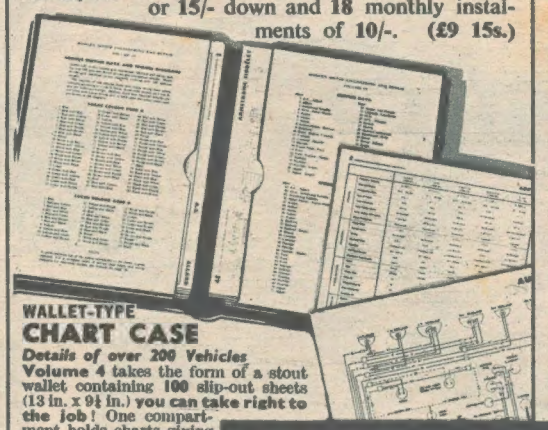

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